



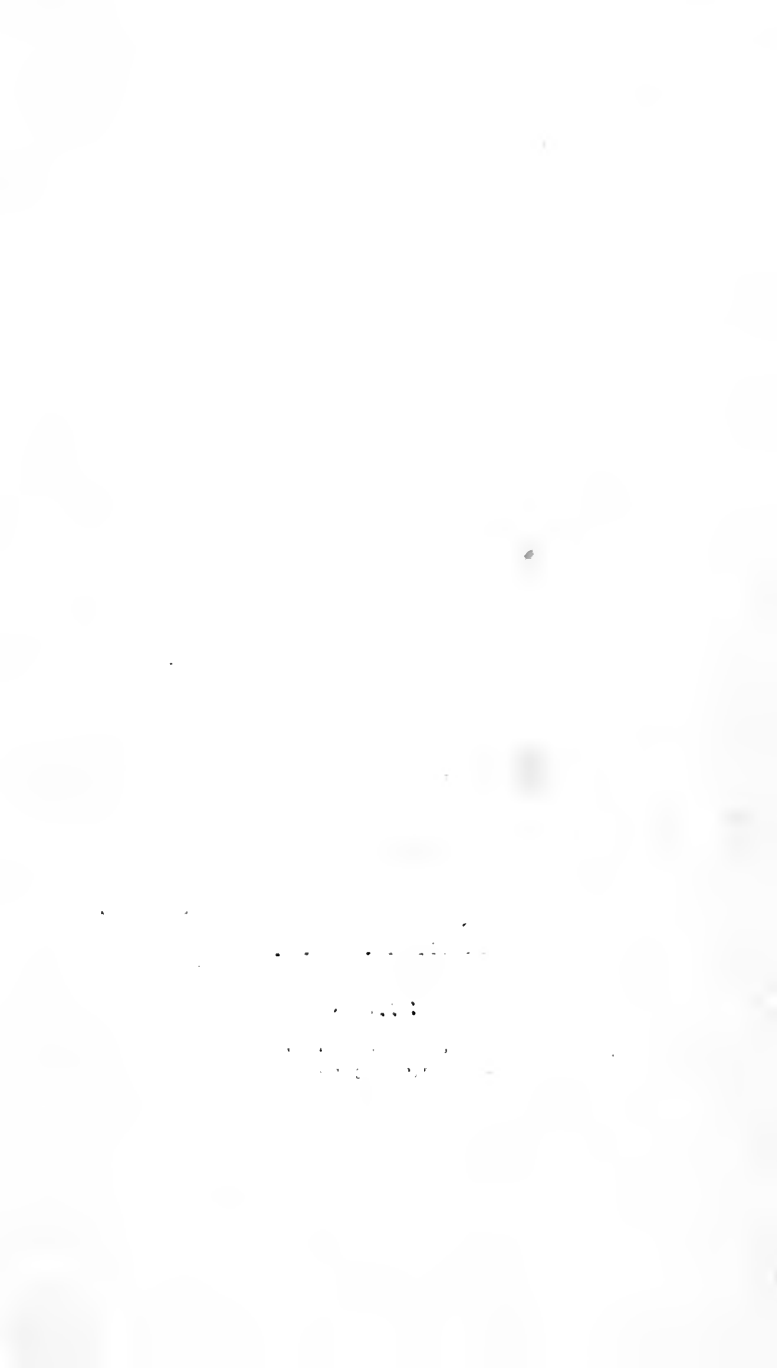
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



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IN MEMORY OF
ALEXANDER F MORRISON

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THE
NEW ENGLISH DRAMA,

WITH
PREFATORY REMARKS,
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES, AND NOTES,

Critical and Explanatory;

*Being the only Edition existing which is faithfully marked with
the*

STAGE BUSINESS, AND STAGE DIRECTIONS,

As Performed

At the Theatres Royal.

By W. OXBERRY, COMEDIAN.

VOLUME FOURTH,

CONTAINING

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.—VENICE PRESERVED.
THE WONDER.—CASTLE SPECTRE.—WOODMAN'S HUT.

London.

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS BY W. SIMPKIN AND
R. MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT, LUDGATE-STREET;
G. CHAPPLE, 66, PALL-MALL; AND SOLD BY W. AND
J. LOWNDES, 9, BRYDGES-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN.

1818.

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Orberry's Edition.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER,

A COMEDY;

BY

Oliver Goldsmith, M. B.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY MARKED WITH
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AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

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1818.

want of being carried far enough. He is in his own sex what a hoyden is in the other. He is that vulgar nickname, a *hobboty-hoy*, dramatised; forward and sheepish, mischievous and idle, cunning and stupid, with the vices of the man and the follies of the boy, fond of low company, and giving himself all the airs of consequence of the young squire. His vacant delight in playing at cup and ball, and his impenetrable confusion and obstinate gravity in spelling the letter, drew fresh beauties from Mr. Liston's face. *Young Marlow's* bashfulness in the scenes with his mistress is, when well-acted, irresistibly ludicrous; but still nothing can quite overcome our incredulity as to the existence of such a character in the present day, and in the rank of life, and with the education which *Marlow* is supposed to have had. It is a highly amusing caricature, a ridiculous fancy, but no more. One of the finest and most delicate touches of character is in the transition from this modest gentleman's manner with his mistress to the easy and agreeable tone of familiarity with the supposed chambermaid, which was not total and abrupt, but exactly such in kind and degree as such a character of natural reserve and constitutional timidity would undergo from the change of circumstances. Of the other characters in the piece, the most amusing are Tony Lumpkin's associates at the Three Pigeons; and of these we profess the greatest partiality for the important showman, who declares, that "his bear dances to none but the genteelst of tunes, '*Water parted from the sea*,' or *the minuet in Ariadne*!" This is certainly the "high-fantastical" of low comedy.

Costume.

SIR CHARLES MARLOW.

Gentleman's old fashioned blue suit, camlet fly, and cocked hat.

HARDCASTLE.

Old fashioned camlet suit, cocked hat, and scarlet roquelaure.

YOUNG MARLOW.

Slate-coloured coat, white waistcoat, pantaloons, and black boots.
2nd. Dress suit.

HASTINGS.

Gentleman's plain suit.

TONY LUMPKIN.

Scarlet jacket, flowered silk waistcoat, buff breeches.

STINGO.

Country coat, red waistcoat, blue apron.

DIGGORY.

White country coat, flowered waistcoat, buff breeches.

MRS. HARDCASTLE.

Brocade sack and petticoat. 2nd dress, brown stuff petticoat, with mud on it, and a small black cloak.

MISS HARDCASTLE.

White muslin dress, trimmed with lace. 2nd dress, smart coloured gown, white apron trimmed with ribband.

MISS NEVILLE.

Blue satin body, leno petticoat trimmed with blue satin.

The time this piece takes in representation is two hours and fifty-seven minutes. The first act occupies the space of thirty minutes—the second, forty—the third, thirty-five—the fourth, thirty-seven—the fifth, thirty-five.—The half price commences, generally, at nine o'clock.

Stage Directions.

By R. H.	is meant.	Right Hand.
L. H.		Left Hand.
S. E.		Second Entrance.
U. E.		Upper Entrance.
M. D.		Middle Door.
D. F.		Door in Flat.
R. H. D.		Right Hand Door.
L. H. D.		Left Hand Door.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

As it was originally acted at Covent-garden in 1773.

<i>Sir Charles Marlow</i>	Mr. Gardner.
<i>Hardcastle</i>	Mr. Shuter.
<i>Young Marlow</i>	Mr. Lee Lewes.
<i>Hastings</i>	Mr. Du Bellamy.
<i>Tony Lumpkin</i>	Mr. Quick.
<i>Stingo</i>	
<i>Diggory</i>	
<i>Roger</i>	
<i>Ralph</i>	
<i>Gregory</i>	
<i>Tom Twist</i>	
<i>Jack Stang</i>	
<i>Tim Tickle</i>	
<i>Jeremy</i>	
<i>Mat Muggins</i>	
<i>Servant</i>	
<i>Mrs. Hardcastle</i>	Mrs. Green.
<i>Miss Hardcastle</i>	Mrs. Bulkley.
<i>Miss Neville</i>	Mrs. Kniveton.
<i>Maid</i>	



	Drury-lane, 1814.	1817-18. Covent-garden.
<i>Sir Charles Marlow.</i>	Mr. R. Phillips.	Mr. Chapman.
<i>Young Marlow</i>	Mr. Decamp.	Mr. C. Kemble.
<i>Hardcastle</i>	Mr. Downton.	Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Hastings</i>	Mr. Holland.	Mr. Abbott.
<i>Tony Lumpkin</i>	Mr. Tokely.	Mr. Liston.
<i>Diggory</i>	Mr. Ebsworth.	Mr. Simmons.
<i>Roger</i>	Mr. Chatterley.	Mr. Penn.
<i>Thomas</i> ..	Mr. Maddocks.	Mr. Williams.
<i>Dick</i>	Mr. Buxton.	Mr. Sarjent.
<i>Ralph</i>	Mr. J. West.	Mr. Louis.
<i>Landlord</i>	Mr. Evans.	Mr. Atkins.
<i>Twist</i>	Mr. Cooke.	Mr. Treby.
<i>Bearward</i>	Mr. Fisher.	Mr. Crumpton.
<i>Muggins</i>	Mr. Bennett.	Mr. Jefferies.
<i>Stang</i>	Mr. Lee.	Mr. Norris.
<i>Jeremy</i>		Mr. King.
<i>Groom</i>		Mr. Menage.
<i>Mrs. Hardcastle</i>	Mrs. Sparks.	Mrs. Davenport.
<i>Miss Neville</i>	Mrs. Orger.	Miss Foote.
<i>Miss Hardcastle</i>	Mrs. Davison.	Miss Brunton.
<i>Dolly</i>	Miss Tidswell.	Miss Green.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in an old-fashioned House.*

Enter HARDCASTLE and MRS. HARDCASTLE, R.H.

Mrs. H. I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little? There's the two miss Hoggs, and our neighbour, Mrs. Grigsby, go to take a month's polish every winter.

Hard. Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

Mrs. H. Ay, your times were fine times indeed; you have been telling us of them for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife and little Cripple-gate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment, your old stories of prince Eugene and the duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

Hard. And I love it. I love every thing that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and I believe, Dorothy, (*Taking her Hand.*) you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

Mrs. H. Lord, Mr. Harcastle, you're for ever at your Dorothys, and your old wives. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

Hard. Let me see ; twenty added to twenty makes just fifty and seven.

Mrs. H. It's false, Mr. Harcastle : I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband ; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

Hard. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely.

Mrs. H. No matter ; Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

Hard. Learning, quotha ! a mere composition of tricks and mischief.

Mrs. H. Humour, my dear ; nothing but humour. Come, Mr. Harcastle, you must allow the boy a little humour.

Hard. I'd sooner allow him an horsepond. If burning the footman's shoes, frightening the maids, worrying the kittens, be humour, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popp'd my bald head into Mrs. Frizzle's face.

Mrs. H. And am I to blame ? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's latin may do for him ?

Hard. Latin for him ! a cat and fiddle. No, no, the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

Mrs. H. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now ; for I believe we shan't have him long among us. Any body that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

Hard. Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

Mrs. H. He coughs somtimes.

Hard. Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

Mrs. H. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

Hard. And truly so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking-trumpet. (*Tony hallooing behind the Scenes, R.H.*)—O there he goes—A very consumptive figure truly.

Enter TONY, R.H. crossing the Stage.

Mrs. H. Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Wont you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

Tony. I'm in haste, mother, I can't stay.

Mrs. H. You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear; you look most shockingly.

Tony. I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons expect me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

Hard. Ay; the alehouse, the old place: I thought so.

Mrs. H. A low, paltry set of fellows.

Tony. Not so low, neither. There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slung the horse-doctor, little Am-inidab that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter.

Mrs. H. Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least.

Tony. As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint myself.

Mrs. H. (*Detaining him.*) You shan't go.

Tony. I will, I tell you.

Mrs. H. I say you shan't.

Tony. We'll see which is strongest, you or I.

[*Exit, hauling her out, L.H.*]

Hard. Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town,

she is as fond of gauze and French frippery, as the best of them.

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE, L.H.

Hard. Blessings on my pretty innocence ! Dress'd out as usual, my Kate. Goodness ! what a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl ! I could never teach the fools of this age, that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain.

Miss H. You know our agreement, sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner ; and in the evening, I put on my housewife's dress to please you.

Hard. Well, remember I insist on the terms of our agreement : and, by-the-by, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

Miss H. I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

Hard. Then to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow him shortly after.

Miss H. Indeed ! I wish I had known something of this before. Bless me, how shall I behave ? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him ; our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

Hard. Depend upon it, child, I'll never controul your choice ; but Mr. Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

Miss H. Is he ?

Hard. Very generous.

Miss H. I believe I shall like him.

Hard. Young and brave.

Miss H. I'm sure I shall like him.

Hard. And very handsome.

Miss H. My dear papa, say no more; (*Kissing his Hand.*) he's mine, I'll have him.

Hard. And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in the world.

Miss H. Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word reserved has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

Hard. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

Miss H. He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so every thing, as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him.

Hard. Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than even wager he may not have you.

Miss H. My dear papa, why will you mortify one so?—Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery; set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

Hard. Bravely resolved! In the mean time I'll go prepare the servants for his reception; as we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits the first day's muster. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Miss H. Lud, this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. Young, handsome; these he puts last; but I put them foremost. Sensible, good natured; I like all that. But then reserved and sheepish; that's much against him. Yet can't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I—But I vow, I'm disposing of the husband, before I have secured the lover.

Enter MISS NEVILLE, R.H.

Miss H. I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening? is there any thing whimsical about me? is it one of my well-looking days, child? am I in face to-day?

Miss N. Perfectly, my dear. Yet now I look again—bless me! sure no accident has happened among the canary birds or the gold fishes. Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

Miss H. No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened—I can scarce get it out—I have been threatened with a lover.

Miss N. And his name—

Miss H. Is Marlow.

Miss N. Indeed!

Miss H. The son of sir Charles Marlow.

Miss N. As I live the most intimate friend of Mr. Hastings, my admirer. They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

Miss H. Never.

Miss N. He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue, he is the modestest man alive; but his acquaintance give him a very different character among women of another stamp: you understand me.

Miss H. An odd character indeed. I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him; but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear? has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony, as usual?

Miss N. I have just come from one of our agreeable tête-a-têtes. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

Miss H. And her partiality is such, that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like your's is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it,

I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

Miss N. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

Miss H. My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

Miss N. It is a good natur'd creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to any body but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements. Allons, courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

Miss H. Would it were bed time and all were well.
[*Exeunt, L.H.*]

SCENE II.—*An Alehouse-room.*

*Several shabby Fellows, with Punch and Tobacco.
TONY at the Head of the Table, a little higher
than the Rest: a Mallet in his Hand.*

Omnes. Hurree, hurree, hurree, bravo.

1. *Fel.* Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The squire is going to knock himself down for a song.

Omnes. Ay, a song, a song.

Tony. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, the Three Pigeons.

SONG.*

*Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain,
With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
Gives genius a better discerning.*

* This song is often omitted.

*Let them brag of their heathenish gods,
 Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians :
 Their quis, and their quæs, and their quods,
 They're all but a parcel of pigeons.
 Toroddle, toroddle, toroll.*

*When methodist preachers come down
 A preuching that drinking is sinful,
 I'll wager the rascals a crown,
 They always preach best with a skinful.
 But when you come down with your pence,
 For a slice of their scurvy religion,
 I'll leave it to all men of sense,
 But you, my good friend, are the pigeon.
 Toroddle, toroddle, toroll.*

*Then come, put the jorum about,
 And let us be merry and clever ;
 Our hearts and our liquors are stout ;
 Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons for ever.
 Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
 Your hustards, your ducks, and your widgeons ;
 But of all the birds in the air,
 Here's a health to the Three Jolly pigeons.
 Toroddle, toroddle, toroll.*

Omnes. Bravo, bravo.

1 Fel. The squire has got spunk in him.

2 Fel. I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.

3 Fel. O, damn any thing that's low ; I can't bear it.

4 Fel. The genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time, if so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

3 Fel. I like the maxim of it, master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes.—“Water parted,” or the minuet in Ariadne.

2 Fel. What a pity it is the squire is not come to

his own. It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

Tony. Ecod, and so it would, master Slang. I'd then show what it was to keep choice of company.

2 Fel. Oh, he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the strait horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow. It was a saying in the place, that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls in the whole county.

Tony. Ecod, and when I'm of age I'll be no bastard, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bet Bouncer, and the miller's grey mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well, Stingo, what's the matter?

Enter LANDLORD, L.H.

Land. There be two gentlemen, in a post chaise, at the door. They have lost their way upo' the forest, and they are talking something about Mr. Hardcastle.

Tony. As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

Land. I believe they may. They look woundily like Frenchmen.

Tony. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. [*Exit Landlord, L.H.*] Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon. [*Exeunt Mob, L.H.U.E.*] Father-in-law has been calling me whelp, and hound, this half-year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian. But then, I'm afraid!—afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a year, and let him frighten me out of that if he can.

Enter LANDLORD, conducting MARLOW and HASTINGS, L.H.

Mar. What a tedious, uncomfortable day have we had of it. We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore.

Hast. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of your's, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

Mar. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet; and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

Hast. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

Tony. No offence, gentlemen; but I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr. Hardecastle, in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

Hast. Not in the least, sir; but should thank you for information.

Tony. Nor the way you came?

Hast. No sir; but if you can inform us—

Tony. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that—you have lost your way.

Mar. We wanted no ghost to tell us that.

Tony. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

Mar. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

Tony. No offence: but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardecastle, a cross-grain'd, old-fashion'd, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

Hast. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

Tony. The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping,

talkative maypole—the son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that every body is fond of.

Mar. Our information differs in this : the daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful ; the son, an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

Tony. He-he-hem—Then, Gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr. Hardecastle's house this night, I believe.

Hast. Unfortunate !

Tony. It's a damn'd long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr. Hardecastle's ; (*Winking upon the Landlord.*) Mr. Hardecastle's, of Quagmire-marsh, you understand me.

Land. Master Hardecastle's ! Lack-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong ! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have cross'd down Squash-lane.

Mar. Cross down Squash-lane.

Land. Then you were to keep straight forward till you came to four roads.

Mar. Come to where four roads meet ?

Tony. Ay, but you must be sure to take only one of them.

Mar. O, sir, you're facetious.

Tony. Then keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crack-skull common : there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill—

Mar. Zounds, man ! we could as soon find out the longitude !

Hast. What's to be done, Marlow ?

Mar. This house promises but a poor reception ; though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us.

Land. Mack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

Tony. And, to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. (*After a Pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted.*) I have hit it: don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fireside, with—three chairs and a bolster?

Hast. I hate sleeping by the fireside.

Mar. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

Tony. You do, do you?—then let me see—what—if you go on a mile further, to the Buck's Head, the old Buck's Head, on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole country?

Hast. O ho! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

Land. (*Apart to Tony.*) Sure you be'nt sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?

Tony. Mum, you fool you; let them find that out. (*To them.*) you have only to keep on strait forward till you come to a large house on the road side: you'll see a pair of large horns over the door: that's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

Hast. Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way.

Tony. No, no: but I tell you, though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company, and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman, and his aunt a justice of peace.

Land. A troublesome old blade, to be sure: but a keeps as good wines, and beds, as any in the whole country.

Mar. Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connexion. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

Tony. No, no, strait forward. I'll just step, myself, and show you a piece of the way. (*To the Landlord.*) Mum.

Land. Ah, bless your heart, for a sweet, pleasant—damn'd, mischievous son of a whore. [*Exeunt, L.H.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An old-fashioned House.*

Enter **HARDCASTLE**, *followed by three or four awkward Servants*, R.H.

Hard. Well, I hope you're perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can show that you have been used to good company, without stirring from home.

Omnes. Ay, ay:

Hard. When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again, like frightened rabbits in a warren.

Omnes. No, no.

Hard. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger, and from your head, you blockhead you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

Dig. Ay, mind how I hold them; I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill——

Hard. You must not be so talkative, Diggory; you must be all attention to the guests: you must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating.

Dig. By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forwards, eed he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

Hard. Blockhead! is not a bellyful in the kitchen

as good as a bellyful in the parlour? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

Dig. Ecod I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

Hard. Diggory, you are too talkative. Then if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a laughing, as if you made part of the company.

Dig. Then ecod your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gun-room: I can't help laughing at that—he! he! he! he!—for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha! ha! ha!

Hard. Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, Sir, if you please. (*To Diggory.*)—Eh, why don't you move?

Dig. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

Hard. A glass of wine, if you please—what, will nobody move?

1 *Serv.* I'm not to leave this place.

2 *Serv.* I'm sure it's no pleace of mine.

3 *Serv.* Nor mine, for sartain.

Dig. Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

Hard. You numskulls! and so while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starv'd. O you dunces! I find I must begin all over again.—But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads. I'll go in the mean time, and give my old friend's son a hearty welcome at the gate. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Dig. By the elevens, my place is gone quite out of my head.

Roger. I know that my place is to be every where.

1 *Serv.* Where the devil is mine?

2 *Serv.* My place is to be no where at all; and so I'll go about my business. [*Exeunt Servants, running about, as if frightened, different ways.*]

Enter MARLOW and HASTINGS, L.H

Hast. After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house; antique, but creditable.

Mar. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good house-keeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

Hast. As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good side-board, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame the bill confoundedly.

Mar. Travellers, George, must pay in all places; the only difference is, that in good inns you pay dearly for luxuries; in bad inns you are fleeced and starved.

Hast. You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised that you, who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense, and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

Mar. The Englishman's malady: but tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talked of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman—except my mother.—But among females of another class, you know—

Hast. Ay, among them you are impudent enough of all conscience.

Mar. They are of us, you know.

Hast. But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler; you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

Mar. Why, man, that's because I do want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate. But I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally overset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

Hast. If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the bar-maid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker—

Mar. Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle; but to me a modest woman, drest out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

Hast. Ha! ha! ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

Mar. Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If indeed, like an eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad start-question, of madam, will you marry me? No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

Hast. I pity you; but how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

Mar. As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low. Answer yes, or no, to all her demands—But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father's again.

Hast. I'm surprised, that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

Mar. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you; the family don't know you; as my friend, you are sure of a reception, and let honour do the rest.

Enter **HARDCASTLE**, **L.H.**

Hard. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire; I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate: I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

Mar. (*Aside.*) He has got our names from the servants already. (*To Mar.*) We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. (*To Hast.*) I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning; I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

Hard. I beg, Mr. Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

Hast. I fancy, George, you're right: the first blow is half the battle. We must, however, open the campaign.

Hard. Mr. Marlow—Mr. Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no restraint in this house. This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen; you may do just as you please here.

Mar. Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. We must show our generalship, by securing, if necessary, a retreat.

Hard. Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the duke of Marlborough, when he went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison.

Mar. Ay, and we'll summon your garrison, old boy.

Hard. He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men.

Hast. Marlow, what's a clock.

Hard. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men.

Mar. Five minutes to seven.

Hard. Which might consist of about five thousand

men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. Now, says the duke of Marlborough, to George Brooks that stood next to him—You must have heard of George Brooks—I'll pawn my dukedom, says he, but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood. So—

Mar. What, my good friend, if you give us a glass of punch in the mean time, it would help us to carry on the siege with vigour.

Hard. Punch, sir!—This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with. (*Aside.*)

Mar. Yes, sir, punch. A glass of warm punch after our journey, will be comfortable.

Enter Servant, with a Tankard, L.H.

This is Liberty-hall, you know.

Hard. Here's a cup, sir.

Mar. So this fellow, in his Liberty-hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

Hard. (*Taking the cup.*) I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepar'd it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr. Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance.

(*Drinks, and gives the Cup to Marlow.*)

Mar. A very impudent fellow this; but he's a character, and I'll humour him a little. (*Aside.*) Sir, my service to you. (*Drinks and gives the Cup to Hastings.*)

Hast. I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper, before he has learned to be a gentleman. (*Aside.*)

Mar. From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country. Warm work, now and then at elections, I suppose.

(*Gives the Tankard to Hardcastle.*)

Hard. No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business for us that sell ale.

(*Gives the Tankard to Hastings.*)

Hast. So then you have no turn for politics, I find.

Hard. Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about who's in or who's out, than I do about John Nokes or Tom Stiles. So my service to you.

Hast. So that with eating above stairs and drinking below, with receiving your friends within and amusing them without, you lead a good, pleasant, bustling life of it.

Hard. I do stir about a good deal, that's certain.—Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlour.

Mar. (*After drinking.*) And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster-hall.

Hard. Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

Mar. Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy. (*Aside.*)

Hast. So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack them with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher. (*Drinks.*)

Hard. Good, very good, thank you; ha! ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks, at the battle of Belgrade. You shall hear.

Mar. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I think it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

Hard. For supper, sir!—Was ever such a request to a man in his own house! (*Aside.*)

Mar. Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

Hard. Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes be

held.—(*Aside.*)—Why really, sir, as for supper, I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cookmaid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

Mar. You do, do you?

Hard. Entirely. By-the-by, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

Mar. Then I beg they'll admit me as one of their privy-council. It's a way I have got. When I travel, I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence, I hope, sir.

Hard. O no, sir, none in the least: yet, I don't know how, our Bridget, the cookmaid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

Hast. Let's see the list of the larder then. I ask it as a favour. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

Mar. (*To Hardcastle, who looks at them with surprise.*) Sir, he's very right, and it's my way too.

Hard. Sir, you have a right to command here.—Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare, for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. Your manner, Mr. Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

[*Servant brings on the bill of fare, and Exit, L.H.*]

Hast. All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! We shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. But let's hear the bill of fare. (*Aside.*)

Mar. (*Perusing.*) What's here? For the first course; for the second course; for the dessert.—The devil, sir! do you think we have brought down the whole joiners' company, or the corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

Hast. But let's hear it.

Mar. (*Reading.*) For the first course: at the top, a pig and prune sauce.

Hast. Damn your pig, I say.

Mar. And damn your prune sauce, say I.

Hard. And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig, with prune sauce, is very good eating.—Their impudence confounds me.—(*Aside.*) Gentlemen, you are my guests, make what alterations you please. Is there any thing else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

Mar. Item.—A pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff—taff—taffety cream.

Hast. Confound your made dishes! I shall be as much at a loss in this house, as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

Hard. I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like; but if there be any thing you have a particular fancy to——

Mar. Why really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of.

Hard. I intreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

Mar. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me, I always look to these things myself.

Hard. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

Mar. You see I'm resolved on it.—A very troublesome fellow, as ever I met with. (*Aside.*)

Hard. Well, sir, I'm resolv'd at least to attend you.—This may be modern modesty, but I never saw any thing look so like old-fashioned impudence.

[*Exit Marlow and Hardcastle, R.H.*]

Hast. So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. But who can be angry with those assiduities which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

Enter MISS NEVILLE, L.H.

Miss N. My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

Hast. Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

Miss N. An inn! you mistake; my aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

Hast. My friend, Mr. Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow, whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.

Miss N. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often. Ha! ha! ha!

Hast. He whom your aunt intends for you? He of whom I have such just apprehensions?

Miss N. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him, if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

Hast. Thou dear dissembler!—You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with the journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then, if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected.

Miss N. I have often told you, that, though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India Director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeed-

ing. The instant they are put into my possession, you shall find me ready to make them and myself your's.

Hast. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the mean time, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that, if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house, before our plan was ripe for execution.

Miss N. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss Hardeastle is just returned from walking; what if we persuade him she is come to this house as to an inn?—Come this way. (*They confer.*)

Enter MARLOW, R.H.

Mar. The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself, but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family.—What have we got here?—

Hast. My dear Charles, let me congratulate you—The most fortunate accident!—Who do you think has just alighted?

Mar. Cannot guess.

Hast. Our mistresses, boy; miss Hardeastle, and miss Neville. Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighbourhood, they called, on their return, to take fresh horses here. Miss Hardeastle has just stepped into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh!

Mar. I have just been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment. (*Aside.*)

Hast. Well! but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

Mar. Oh! yes. Very fortunate—a most joyful encounter—But our dresses, George, you know, are in

disorder—What, if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow?—To-morrow at her own house—it will be every bit as convenient—and rather more respectful—To-morrow let it be. (*Offering to go.*)

Miss N. By no means, sir. Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will show the ardour of your impatience. Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

Mar. O! the devil! how shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!

Hast. Pshaw, man! 'tis but the first plunge, and all's over. She's but a woman, you know.

Mar. And of all women, she that I dread most to encounter!

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE, L.H. as returning from walking, a bonnet, &c.

Hast. (*Introducing them.*) Miss Hardeastle, Mr. Marlow. I'm proud of bringing two persons together, who only want to know, to esteem each other.

Miss H. (*Aside.*) Now, for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. (*After a Pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted.*) I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir—I'm told you had some accidents by the way.

Mar. Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry, madam—or rather glad of any accidents—that are so agreeably concluded. Hem!

Hast. (*To Mar.*) You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

Miss H. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You that have seen so much of the finest company, can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

Mar. (*Gathering courage.*) I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but I have kept very little com-

pany. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

Miss H. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve.

Mar. Pardon me, madam; I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of my mirth than uneasiness.

Hast. (*To Mar.*) Bravo, bravo! never spoke so well in your whole life. Well! miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr. Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

Mar. Not in the least, Mr. Hastings. We like your company of all things. (*To Hast.*) Zounds! George, sure you wont go! How can you leave us?

Hast. Our presenee will but spoil conversation, so we'll retire to the next room. (*To Mar.*) You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little tête-a-tête of our own. [*Exeunt Hast. and Miss N. R.H.*]

Miss H. (*After a pause.*) But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir? The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses.

Mar. (*Relapsing into timidity.*) Pardon me, madam, I—I—I—as yet have studied—only—to—deserve them.

Miss H. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them.

Mar. Perhaps so, madam; but I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex—But, I'm afraid, I grow tiresome.

Miss H. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it for ever. Indeed I have often been surprized how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

Mar. It's—a disease—of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes, there must be some who, wanting a relish—for—um—a—um.

Miss H. I understand you, sir. There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting.

Mar. My meaning, madam; but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing, that in this age of hypocrisy—a—

Miss H. Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions! (*Aside.*) You were going to observe, sir—

Mar. I was observing, madam—I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

Miss H. I vow, and so do I. (*Aside.*) You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy, something about hypocrisy, sir.

Mar. Yes, madam; in this age of hypocrisy, there are few who, upon strict enquiry, do not—a—a—

Miss H. I understand you perfectly, sir.

Mar. 'Egad! and that's more than I do myself. (*Aside.*)

Miss H. You mean that, in this hypocritical age, there are few that do not condemn in public, what they practise in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

Mar. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths, have least of it in their bosoms. But I see miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

Miss H. I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray go on.

Mar. Yes, madam. I was—but she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honour to attend you.

Miss H. Well then, I'll follow.

Mar. This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me. (*Aside. Exit, R.H.*)

Miss H. Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview? I'm certain he scarce look'd me in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his

fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody?—that, faith, is a question I can scarcely answer. *[Exit, R.H.]*

Enter TONY and MISS NEVILLE, followed by MRS. HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS, R.H.

Tony. What do you follow me for, cousin Con? I wonder you're not asham'd to be so very engaging.

Miss N. I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations, and not be to blame.

Tony. Ay, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me though; but it wont do. I tell you, cousin Con, it wont do; so I beg you'll keep your distance; I want no nearer relationship.

(She follows, coquetting him to the back scene.)

Mrs. H. Well, I vow, Mr. Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

Hast. Never there! you amaze me! from your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St. James's, or Tower-wharf.

Mrs. H. O! sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighbouring rustics; but who can have a manner that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places where the nobility chiefly resort; all I can do, is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to know every tête-a-tête from the Scandalous Magazine, and have all the fashions as they come out, in a letter from the two miss Rickets, of Crooked-lane. Pray how do you like this head, Mr. Hastings?

Hast. Extremely elegant and dégagée, upon my word, madam. Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose.

Mrs. H. I protest I dressed it myself from a print in the Ladies' Memorandum-book for the last year.

Hast. Indeed! such a head in a side-box at the play-house, would draw as many gazers as my lady mayoress at a city ball.

Mrs. H. One must dress a little particular, or one may escape in the crowd.

Hast. But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress. (*Bowing.*)

Mrs. H. Yet, what signifies my dressing, when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr. Harcastle? all I can say will not argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and, where he was bald, to plaster it over, like my lord Pately, with powder.

Hast. You are right, madam; for, as among the ladies there are none ugly, so among the men there are none old.

Mrs. H. But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual gothic vivacity, he said, I only wanted him to throw off his wig, to convert it into a tête for my own wearing.

Hast. Intolerable! at your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

Mrs. H. Pray, Mr. Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

Hast. Some time ago, forty was all the mode; but I'm told, the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

Mrs. H. Seriously. Then I shall be too young for the fashion.

Mast. No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past forty. For instance, miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child, a mere maker of samplers.

Mrs. H. And yet Mrs. Niece thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels, as the oldest of us all.

Hast. Your niece, is she? And that young gentleman, a brother of your's, I should presume?

Mrs. H. My son, sir. They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. (*To them.*) Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance, this evening?

Tony. I have been saying no soft things; but, that it's very hard to be followed about so. Ecod! I've not a place in the house that's left to myself, but the stable.

Mrs. H. Never mind him, Con, my dear. He's in another story behind your back.

Miss N. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces, to be forgiven in private.

Tony. That's a damned confounded—crack.

Mrs. H. Ah! he's a sly one. Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr. Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth to a T. They're of a size too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr. Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

Tony. You had as good not make me, I tell you.

(*Measuring.*)

Miss N. O lud! he has almost cracked my head.

Mrs. H. O the monster! for shame, Tony. You a man, and behave so!

Tony. If I'm a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool of any longer.

Mrs. H. Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I'm to get for the pains I have taken in your education? I, that have rock'd you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that wastecoat to make you genteel?

Tony. But, ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

Mrs. H. Wasn't it all for your good, viper? Wasn't it all for your good?

Tony. I wish you'd let me and my good alone then. Snubbing this way, when I'm in spirits. If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep ding-ing it, ding-ing it into one so.

Mrs. H. That's false; I never see you when you're in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel. I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable wild notes, unfeeling monster!

Tony. Ecod! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

Mrs. H. Was ever the like? But I see he wants to break my heart, I see he does.

Hast. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty.

Mrs. H. Well, I must retire. Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr. Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation: was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Hardcastle and Miss Neville, R.H.*]

Tony. (*Singing.*)

There was a young man riding by,

And fain would have his will.

Rang do dillo dee.

Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together, and they said they liked the book the better, the more it made them cry.

Hast. Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

Tony. That's as I find 'um.

Hast. Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer? And yet she appears to me a pretty well-tempered girl.

Tony. That's because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her; and there's not a more bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom.

Hast. Pretty encouragement this for a lover. (*Aside.*)

Tony. I have seen her since the height of that.—She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket, or a colt the first day's breaking.

Hast. To me she appears sensible and silent!

Tony. Ay, before company. But when she's with her playmates, she's as loud as a hog in a gate.

Hast. But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me.

Tony. Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up, and you're flung in the ditch.

Hast. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty—yes, you must allow her some beauty.

Tony. Bandbox! She's all a made up thing, mun. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod, she has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. She'd make two of she.

Hast. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hands?

Tony. Anon.

Hast. Would you thank him that would take miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

Tony. Ay; but where is there such a friend, for who would take her?

Hast. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

Tony. Assist you! Ecod, I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise, that shall trundle you off in a twinkling; and may be get you a part of her fortin, beside, in jewels, that you little dream of.

Hast. My dearsquire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

Tony. Come along then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me.

We are the boys (Singing.)

That fears no noise

Where thundering caunons roar.

[*Exeunt, R.H.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Enter* HARDCASTLE, L.H.

Hard. What could my old friend, sir Charles, mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fireside already.—He took off his boots in the parlour, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter—She will certainly be shocked at it.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, *plainly dressed*, R.H.

Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

Miss H. I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands, that I take care to observe them, without ever debating their propriety.

Hard. And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my modest gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

Miss H. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

Hard. I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties.

Miss H. I never saw any thing like it; and a man of the world too!

Hard. Ay, he learned it all abroad.

Miss H. It seems all natural to him.

Hard. A good deal assisted by bad company, and a French dancing-master.

Miss H. Sure you mistake, papa! A French

dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look—that awkward address—that bashful manner——

Hard. Whose look? whose manner, child?

Miss H. Mr. Marlow's! His mauvaise honte, his timidity struck me at the first sight.

Hard. Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses.

Miss H. Sure, sir, you rally! I never saw any one so modest.

Hard. And can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson was but a fool to him.

Miss H. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

Hard. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

Miss H. He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of girls that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being tiresome: then left the room with a bow, and, madam, I would not for the world detain you.

Hard. He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before. Asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer. Interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun; and when I was in my best story of the duke of Marlborough and prince Eugene, he ask'd if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch.

Miss H. One of us must certainly be mistaken.

Hard. If he be what he has shown himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

Miss H. And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

Hard. In one thing then we are agreed—to reject him.

Miss H. Yes, but upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming;

if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate—I don't know—the fellow is well enough for a man—Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse-race in the country.

Hard. If we should find him so—but that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business. I'm seldom deceived in that.

Miss H. And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance. But as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

Hard. Agreed. But depend on't I'm in the right.

Miss H. And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong. [*Exeunt*, L.B.]

Enter TONY, running in with a casket, R.H.

Tony. Ecod, I have got them. Here they are. My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs and all. My mother sha'n't cheat the poor souls out of their fortune, neither. O! my genius, is that you?

Enter HASTINGS.

Hast. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last. Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

Tony. And here's something to bear your charges by the way. (*Giving the Casket.*) Your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them.

Hast. But how have you procured them from your mother?

Tony. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

Hast. Thousands do it every day. But, to be plain

with you, miss Neville is endeavouring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them.

Tony. Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head.

Hast. But I dread the effects of her resentment, when she finds she has lost them.

Tony. Never you mind her resentment, leave me to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker. Zounds! here they are. Morrice. Prance.

[*Exit Hastings, L.H.*]

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE, R.H.

Mrs. H. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels! It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

Miss N. But what will repair beauty at forty, will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

Mrs. H. Your's, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my lady Kill-day-light, and Mr. Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites back.

Miss N. But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my finery about me?

Mrs. H. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. What do you think, Tony, my dear, does your cousin Con want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty.

Tony. That's as hereafter may be.

Miss N. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me.

Mrs. H. A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut things. They would make you look like the court of king Solomon at a puppet-show. Besides, I believe, I can't readily come at them. They may be missing, for aught I know to the contrary.

Tony. (*Apart to Mrs. Hardcastle.*) Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them. Tell her they're lost. It's the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

Mrs. H. (*Apart to Tony.*) You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So, if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He, he, he!

Tony. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

Miss N. I desire them but for a day, madam. Just to be permitted to show them as relics, and then they may be lock'd up again.

Mrs. H. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them, you should have them. They're missing, I assure you. Lost, for aught I know; but we must have patience wherever they are.

Miss N. I'll not believe it; this is but a shallow pretence to deny me. I know they're too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss.

Mrs. H. Don't be alarm'd, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing and not to be found.

Tony. That I can bear witness to. They are missing and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't.

Mrs. H. You must learn resignation, my dear: for though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am.

Miss N. Ay people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

Mrs. H. Now I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them? and, in the mean time, you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

Miss N. I detest garnets.

Mrs. H. The most becoming things in the world, to

set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You shall have them.

[*Exit*, R.H.]

Miss N. I dislike them of all things. You sha'n't stir—Was ever any thing so provoking, to mislay my own jewels and force me to wear trumpery.

Tony. Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark, he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

Miss N. My dear cousin.

[*Exit*, L.H.]

Tony. Vanish. She's here, and has missed them already. Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about like a Catharine wheel.

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE, R.H.

Mrs. H. Confusion! thieves! robbers! We are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone.

Tony. What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family.

Mrs. H. We are robbed. My bureau has been broke open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone.

Tony. Oh! is that all? Ha! ha! ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life. Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. H. Why, boy, I am ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away.

Tony. Stick to that! ha! ha! ha! stick to that; call me to bear witness.

Mrs. H. I tell you Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined for ever.

Tony. Sure I know they're gone, and I am to say so.

Mrs. H. My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say.

Tony. By the laws, manna, you make me for to laugh, ha! ha! I know who took them well enough, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. H. Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest. I tell you I'm not in jest, booby.

Tony. That's right, that's right: you must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

Mrs. H. Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other.

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs. H. Bear witness again, you blockhead you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of her! Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoy'd my distress?

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

Mrs. H. Do you insult me, monster? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will.

Tony. I can bear witness to that.

[*Runs off; Mrs. Hardcastle follows him, L.H.*]

Enter Miss HARDCASTLE and Maid, R.H.

Miss H. What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn, ha! ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

Maid. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you pass'd by in your present dress, ask'd me if you were the bar-maid? He mistook you for the bar-maid, madam.

Miss H. Did he? Then as I live I'm resolv'd to keep up the delusion. Tell me, how you do like my present dress. Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the *Beaux' Stratagem*?

Maid. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

Miss H. And are you sure he don't remember my face or person?

Maid. Certain of it.

Miss H. I vow I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such, that he

never once looked up during the interview. Indeed if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

Maid. But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

Miss H. In the first place, I shall be seen; and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance; and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the vilest of her sex. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat.

Maid. But are you sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice, so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person.

Miss H. Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar cant—Did your honour call?—Attend the Lion there—Pipes and tobacco for the Angel—The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour.

Maid. It will do, madam, but he's here. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Enter MARLOW, L.H.

Mur. What a bawling in every part of the house! I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story. If I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess with her curtsy down to the ground. I have at last got a moment to myself, and now for recollection. (*Walks and muses.*)

Miss H. Did you call, sir? did your honour call?

Mur. (*Musing.*) As for miss Hardecastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

Miss H. Did your honour call?

(*She still places herself before him, he turning away.*)

Mur. No child. (*Musing.*) Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

Miss H. I'm sure sir, I heard the bell ring.

Mur. No, no. (*Musing.*) I have pleased my father,

however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning.

(*Taking out his Tablets and perusing.*)

Miss H. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir.

Mar. I tell you, no.

Miss H. I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants.

Mar. No, no, I tell you. (*Looks full in her face.*) Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I wanted—I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

Miss. H. O la, sir, you'll make one asham'd.

Mar. Never saw a more sprightly, malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you got any of your—a—what d'ye call it, in the house?

Miss H. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

Mar. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that too.

Miss H. Nectar! nectar! that's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose. We keep no French wines here, sir.

Mar. Of true English growth, I assure you.

Miss H. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

Mar. Eighteen years! Why one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

Miss H. O! sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

Mar. To guess at this distance, you can't be much above forty. (*Approaching.*) Yet nearer I don't think so much. (*Approaching.*) By coming close to some women they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed.—(*Attempting to kiss her.*)

Miss. H. Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age, as they do horses, by mark of mouth.

Mar. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can ever be acquainted?

Miss H. And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I. I'm sure you did not treat miss Harcastle that was here awhile ago in this obstropolous manner. I'll warrant me, before her you look'd dash'd, and kept bowing to the ground, and talk'd, for all the world, as if you was before a justice of the peace.

Mar. 'Egad! she has hit it, sure enough. (*Aside.*) In awe of her, child? Ha! ha! ha! A mere awkward, squinting thing. No, no. I find you don't know me. I laugh'd, and rallied her a little; but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

Miss H. O! then, sir, you are a favourite, I find, among the ladies?

Mar. Yes, my dear, a great favourite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the ladies' club in town, I'm called their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name. but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons. Mr. Solomons, my dear, at your service. (*Offering to salute her.*)

Miss H. Hold, sir, you were introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favourite there, you say?

Mar. Yes, my dear. There's Mrs. Mantrap, lady Betty Blackleg, the countess of Sligo, Mrs. Longhorns, old miss Biddy Buckshin, and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

Miss H. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose?

Mar. Yes, as merry as cards, supper, wine, and old women can make us.

Miss H. And their agreeable Rattle, ha! ha! ha!

Mar. 'Egad I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. (*Aside.*) You laugh, child!

Miss H. I can't but laugh to think what time they all have for minding their work or their family.

Mar. All's well, she don't laugh at me. (*Aside.*)
Do you ever work, child?

Miss H. Ay, sure. There's not a screen or a quilt in the whole house, but can bear witness to that.

Mar. Odso! Then you must show me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. (*Seizing her hand.*)

Miss H. Ay, but the colours don't look well by candle-light. You shall see all in the morning.
(*Struggling.*)

Mar. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance.—Pshaw! the father here! My old luck! I never nicked seven that I did not throw ames ace three times following. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Enter **HARDCASTLE**, *who stands in surprise, R.H.*

Hard. So, madam? So, I find this is your modest lover. This is your humble admirer, that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only ador'd at humble distance.—Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

Miss H. Never trust me, my dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

Hard. By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milk-maid? and now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

Miss H. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

Hard. The girl would actually make one run mad; I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarcely been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may

like his impudence, and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

Miss H. Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

Hard. You shall not have half the time; for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

Miss H. Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

Hard. Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open, do you mind me.

[*Exeunt Hard. R.H. Miss H. L.H.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An old-fashioned House.*

Enter MARLOW, followed by a Servant.

Mar. I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post coach at an inn door. Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

Serv. Yes, your honour.

Mar. She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

Serv. Yes, she said she'd keep it safe enough; she asked me how I came by it? and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Mar. Ha! ha! ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little bar-maid though runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine, she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken.

Enter HASTINGS, L.H.

Hast. Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to repair to the bottom of the garden. Marlow here, and in spirits too!

Mar. Give me joy, George! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

Hast. Some women, you mean. But what success has your honour's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

Mar. Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely, little thing that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to her girdle?

Hast. Well! and what then?

Mar. She's mine, you rogue you. Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips—but, egad! she would not let me kiss them though.

Hast. But are you so sure, so very sure of her?

Mar. Why, man, she talk'd of showing me her work above stairs, and I'm to improve the pattern.

Hast. But how can you, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honour?

Mar. Pshaw! pshaw! We all know the honour of the bar-maid of an inn. I don't intend to rob her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I sha'n't honestly pay for.

Hast. I believe the girl has virtue.

Mar. And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

Hast. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? It's in safety?

Mar. Yes, yes. It's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door a place of safety? Ah, numbskull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself—I have—

Hast. What?

Mar. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

Hast. To the landlady!

Mar. The landlady.

Hast. You did?

Mar. I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

Hast. Yes, she'll bring it forth, with a witness.

Mar. Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion.

Hast. He must not see my uneasiness. (*Aside.*)

Mar. You seem a little disconcerted though, methinks. Sure nothing has happened?

Hast. No, nothing. Never was in better spirits in all my life. And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge?

Mar. Rather too readily. For she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger too. Ha! ha! ha!

Hast. He! he! he! They're safe, however.

Mar. As a guinea in a miser's purse.

Hast. So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. (*Aside.*) Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty barmaid, and, he! he! he! may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Mar. Thank ye, George; I ask no more. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter **HARDCASTLE**, R.H.

Hard. I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. (*Aside.*) Mr. Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. (*Bowing low.*)

Mar. Sir, your humble servant.—What's to be the wonder now? (*Aside.*)

Hard. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so.

Mar. I do from my soul, sir. I don't want much

entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

Hard. I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

Mar. I protest, my very good sir, that's no fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought, they are to blame: I ordered them not to spare the cellar; I did, I assure you. (*To the side scene.*) Here, let one of my servants come up. (*To Hard.*) My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

Hard. Then they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied.

Mar. They had, I assure you: you shall hear from one of themselves.

Enter Servant, drunk, L.H.

You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

Hard. I begin to lose my patience. (*Aside.*)

Jer. Please your honour, liberty and Fleet-street for ever, though I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man; I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, damme! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon—hiccup—upon my conscience, sir.

Mar. You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be. I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer barrel.

Hard. Zounds! he'll drive me distracted if I contain myself any longer. (*Aside.*) Mr. Marlow, sir. I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly.

Mar. Leave your house!—Sure you jest, my good friend? What, when I'm doing what I can to please you?

Hard. I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house.

Mar. Sure you cannot be serious. At this time o'night, and such a night? You only mean to banter me.

Hard. I tell you, sir, I'm serious; and, now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

Mar. Ha! ha! ha! A puddle in a storm. I sha'n't stir a step, I assure you. (*In a serious tone.*) This your house, fellow! It's my house. This is my house. Mine, while I choose to stay. What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me, never in my whole life before.

Hard. Nor I, confound me if ever I did. To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me, this house is mine, sir. By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha! ha! Pray, sir, (*Bantering*) as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and a pair of bellows, perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

Mar. Bring me your bill, sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

Hard. There are a set of prints too. What think you of the Rake's Progress for your own apartment?

Mar. Bring me your bill, I say; and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

Hard. Then there's a bright, brazen warning-pan, that you may see your own brazen face in.

Mar. My bill, I say.

Hard. I had forgot the great chair, for your own particular slumbers, after a hearty meal.

Mar. Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't.

Hard. Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred, modest man, as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. (*Exit, L.H.*)

Mar. How's this? sure I have not mistaken the house! Every thing looks like an inn. The servants cry, coming! The attendance is awkward; the bar-maid too to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. Whither so fast, child? a word with you.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, L.H.

Miss H. Let it be short, then; I'm in a hurry—I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but it's too soon quite to undeceive him. (*Aside.*)

Mar. Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

Miss H. A relation of the family, sir.

Mar. What, a poor relation?

Miss H. Yes, sir. A poor relation, appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

Mar. That is, you act as the bar-maid of this inn.

Miss H. Inn! O law—What brought that in your head; One of the best families in the county keep an inn. Ha! ha! ha! old Mr. Hardcastle's house an inn.

Mar. Mr. Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr. Hardcastle's house, child?

Miss H. Ay, sir, whose else should it be?

Mar. So then all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on. O, confound my stupid head, I shall be laughed at over the whole town. I shall be stuck up in caricatura, in all the print-shops. The Dullissimo Macaroni. To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an inn-keeper.

What a swaggering puppy must he take me for. What a silly puppy do I find myself. There again, may I be hang'd, my dear, but I mistook you for the bar-maid.

Miss H. Dear me! dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my behaviour to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

Mar. Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. My stupidity saw every thing the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurements. But it's all over.—This house I no more show my face in.

Miss H. I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry (*Pretending to cry*) if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said any thing amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

Mar. By heaven, she weeps. This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. (*Aside.*)

Miss H. I'm sure my family is as good as miss Hardecastle's; and, though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind; and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune.

Mar. And why now, my pretty simplicity?

Miss H. Because it puts me at a distance from one, that if I had a thousand pounds I would give it all to.

Mar. This simplicity bewitches me, so that if I stay I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her. (*Aside.*) Excuse me, my lovely girl, you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance. But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, make an honourable connection impossible; and I can never harbour a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in my honour; or of bringing ruin upon one, whose only fault was being too lovely.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Miss H. I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I stooped to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who perhaps may laugh him out of his resolution. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Enter TONY and MISS NEVILLE, R.H.

Tony. Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time; I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

Miss N. But, my dear cousin, sure you wont forsake us in this distress. If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

Tony. To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damn'd bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistlejacket, and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes; we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us. (*They retire and seem to fondle.*)

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE, R.H.

Mrs. H. Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I sha'n't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. But what do I see? Fondling together, as I am alive. I never saw Tony so sprightly before. Ha! have I caught you, my pretty doves! What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs? Ha!

Tony. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

Mrs. H. A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

Miss N. Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

Tony. Oh! it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

Miss N. Agreeable cousin! who can help admiring that natural humour, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless—(*Patting his cheek*)—Ha! it's a bold face.

Mrs. H. Pretty innocence!

Tony. I'm sure I always loved cousin Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that over the harpsicholls, like a parcel of bobbins.

Mrs. H. Ah, he would charm the bird from the tree. I was never so happy before. My boy takes after his father, poor Mr. Lumpkin, exactly. The jewels, my dear Con, shall be your's incontinently. You shall have them. Isn't he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr. Drowsy's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

Enter DIGGORY, L.H.D.

Digg. Where's the squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

Tony. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

Digg. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

Tony. Who does it come from?

Digg. Your worship mun ask that o' the letter it self.

Tony. I could wish to know, though. (*Turning the letter, and gazing on it.*)

Miss N. (*Aside.*) Undone, undone! A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it, we are ruined for ever. I'll keep her employed

a little if I can. (*To Mrs. Hardcastle.*) But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr. Marlow. We so laugh'd. You must know, madam—this way a little, for he must not hear us. (*They confer.*)

Tony. (*Still gazing.*) A damn'd cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print-hand very well. But here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. *To Anthony Lumpkin, Esq.*—It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But when I come to open it, it is all—buzz. That's hard, very hard; for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

Mrs. H. Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher.

Miss N. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way, or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

Mrs. H. He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

Tony. (*Still gazing.*) A damn'd up and down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor. (*Reading.*) Dear sir. Ay, that's that. Then there's an M, and a T, and an S; but whether the next be an izzard or an R, confound me, I cannot tell.

Mrs. H. What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

Miss N. Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. (*Twitching the letter from her.*) Do you know who it is from?

Tony. Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder.

Miss N. Ay, so it is. (*Pretending to read.*) Dear squire, hoping that you're in health, as I am at present. The gentlemen of the Shake-bag club has cut the gentlemen of the Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds—um—odd battle—um—long fighting—um—here, here, it's all about cocks, and fighting;

it's of no consequence ; here, put it up, put it up.—
(*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him.*)

Tony. But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world. I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out. Of no consequence. (*Giving Mrs. Hardcastle the letter.*)

Mrs. H. How's this ? (*Reads.*)

Dear Squire,—I'm now waiting for Miss Neville, with a post-chaise and pair, at the bottom of the garden ; but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised. Dispatch is necessary, as the hag, (ay, the hag,) your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Your's,

HASTINGS.

Grant me patience ! I shall run distracted ! My rage chokes me.

Miss N. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence, or sinister design that belongs to another.

Mrs. H. (*Curtseying very low.*) Fine-spoken madam, you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection, madam. (*Changing her tone.*) And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut, were you too joined against me ? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them.—So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with me. Your old aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. You too, sir, may mount your horse, and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Dig-gory ; I'll show you, that I wish you better than you do yourselves. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Miss N. So, now I'm completely ruined.

Tony. Ay, that's a sure thing.

Miss N. What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool, and after all the nods and signs I made him?

Tony. By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business.—You were so nice and so busy with your Shake-bags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

Enter HASTINGS, L.H.

Hast. So, sir, I find by my servant, that you have shown my letter, and betray'd us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

Tony. Here's another. Ask miss there who betray'd you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

Enter MARLOW, R.H.

Mar. So, I have been finely used here among you. Rendered contemptible, driven into ill-manners, despised, insulted, laughed at.

Tony. Here's another. We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

Miss N. And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

Mar. What can I say to him, a mere boy, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection.

Hast. A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

Miss N. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

Hast. An insensible cub.

Mar. Replete with tricks and mischief.

Tony. Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both, one after the other—with baskets.

Mar. As for him, he's below resentment. But your conduct, Mr. Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me.

Hast. Tortured as I am with my own disappoint-

ments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr. Marlow.

Mar. But, sir——

Miss N. Mr. Marlow, we never kept on your mistake, till it was too late to undeceive you. Be pacified.

Enter DIGGORY, L.H.

Digg. My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Miss N. I come. Oh, Mr. Marlow, if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I'm sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

Mrs. H. (Within.) Miss Neville! Constance; why Constance, I say.

Miss N. I'm coming. Well, constancy. Remember, constancy is the word. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Hast. My heart, how can I support this? To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

Mar. (To Tony.) You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be an assement to you, is here disappointment, and even distress.

Tony. (From a reverie.) Ecod, I have hit it. It's here. Your hands. Your's, and your's, my poor Sulky. Meet me two hours hence at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain. Come along.

[*Exeunt Mar. Tony, and Hast. R.H.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An old-fashioned House.*

Enter SIR CHARLES MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE, R.H.D.

Hard. Ha ! ha ! ha ! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands.

Sir C. And the reserve with which I suppose he treated all your advances.

Hard. And yet he might have seen something in me above a common innkeeper, too.

Sir C. Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper, ha ! ha ! ha !

Hard. Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of any thing but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary ; and though my daughter's fortune is but small—

Sir C. Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me. My son is possessed of more than a competence already ; and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness, and increase it. If they like each other, as you say they do—

Hard. If, man. I tell you they do like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

Sir C. But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

Hard. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself ; and here he comes to put you out of your ifs, I warrant him.

Enter MARLOW, L.H.

Mar. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion.

Hard. Tut, boy, a trifle. You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again.—She'll never like you the worse for it.

Mar. Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

Hard. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr. Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me.

Mar. Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

Hard. Come, boy, I'm an old fellow, and know what's what, as well as you that are younger. I know what has passed between you; but mum.

Mar. Sure, sir, nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side, and the most distant reserve on her's. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family.

Hard. Impudence. No, I don't say that—Not quite impudence.—Girls like to be played with, and rumbled too sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

Mar. May I die, sir, if I ever—

Hard. I tell you, she don't dislike you; and as I'm sure you like her—

Mar. Dear sir, I protest, sir—

Hard. I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

Mar. But why wou't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave miss Harcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

Hard. This fellow's formal, modest impudence is beyond bearing. (*Aside.*)

Sir C. And you never grasp'd her hand, or made any protestations?

Mar. As heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands. I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Sir C. I'm astonish'd at the air of sincerity with which he parted.

Hard. And I'm astonish'd at the deliberate intrep-

dity of his assurance.

Sir C. I dare pledge my life and honour upon his truth.

Hard. Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, R.H.

Kate, come hither, child. Answer us sincerely, and without reserve ; has Mr. Marlow made you any professions of love and affection ?

Miss H. The question is very abrupt, sir : but since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

Hard. (*To Sir C.*) You see.

Sir C. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview ?

Miss H. Yes, sir, several.

Hard. (*To Sir C.*) You see.

Sir C. But did he profess any attachment ?

Miss H. A lasting one.

Sir C. Did he talk of love ?

Miss H. Much, sir.

Sir C. Amazing ! and all this formally ?

Miss H. Formally.

Hard. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied.

Sir C. And how did he behave, madam ?

Miss H. As most professed admirers do. Said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit, and the greatness of mine : mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

Sir C. Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed, I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting, manner by no means describes him, and I'm confident he never sat for the picture.

Miss H. Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity ? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

Sir C. Agreed. And if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end.

[*Ereunt Hard. and Sir C.* R.H.]

Miss H. And if you don't find him what I describe—I fear my happiness must never have a beginning.

[*Exit*, L.H.]

SCENE II.—*The Back of the Garden.*

Enter HASTINGS, L.H.]

Hast. What an idiot am I, to wait here for a fellow, who probably takes a delight in mortifying me. He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance.

Enter TONY, booted and spattered, R.H.]

My honest squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

Tony. Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by-the-by, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stage coach.

Hast. But how? where did you leave your fellow travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

Tony. Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it. Rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such varment.

Hast. Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

Tony. Left them! Why, where should I leave them, but where I found them?

Hast. This is a riddle.

Tony. Riddle me this, then. What's that goes round the house, and round the house, and never touches the house?

Hast. I'm still astray.

Tony. Why that's it, mon. I have led them a stray. By jingo, there's not a pond or slough within five miles of the place, but they can tell the taste of.

Hast. Ha! ha! ha! I understand; you took them in a round, while they supposed themselves going forward. And so you have at last brought them home again.

Tony. You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed-lane, where we stuck fast in the mud.—I then rattled them crack over the stones, up-and-downhill.—I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree-heath,—and from that, with a circumdendibus, I fairly lodg'd them in the horsepond at the bottom of the garden.

Hast. But no accident, I hope.

Tony. No, no. Only mother is confoundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the cattle can scarce crawl. So if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

Hast. My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

Tony. Ay, now it's dear friend, noble squire. Just now, it was all idiot, cub, and run me through the guts. Damn your way of fighting, I say. After we take a knock in this part of the country, we shake hands and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead, and you might go shake hands with the hangman.

Hast. The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville; if you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Tony. Never fear me. Here she comes. Vanish! She's got into the pond, and is dragged up to the waist like a mermaid.

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE, L.H.

Mrs. H. Oh, Tony, I'm kill'd! Shock! Battered to death! I shall never survive it. That last jolt that laid us against the quickset-hedge has done my business.

Tony. Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

Mrs. H. I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drench'd in the mud, overturn'd in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way. Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

Tony. By my guess we should be upon Crackskull-common, about forty miles from home.

Mrs. H. O lud! O lud! the most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

Tony. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. Is that a man galloping behind us? No; its only a tree. Don't be afraid.

Mrs. H. The fright will certainly kill me.

Tony. Do you see any thing like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

Mrs. H. O death!

Tony. No, it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma! don't be afraid.

Mrs. H. As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us. Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

Tony. Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks. (*Aside.*) Ah, it's a highway man with pistols as long as my arm. A damn'd ill-looking fellow.

Mrs. H. Good heaven defend us! he approaches.

Tony. Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger I'll cough and cry hem. When I cough be sure to keep close.

(*Mrs. H. hides behind a tree in the back scene.*)

Enter **HARDCASTLE**, R.H.

Hard. I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. O, Tony, is that you? I did not expect

you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

Tony. Very safe, sir, at my aunt Pedigree's. Hem.

Mrs. H. (From behind.) Ah, death! I find there's danger.

Hard. Forty miles in three hours; sure, that's too much, my youngster.

Tony. Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys, as they say. Hem.

Mrs. H. (From behind.) Sure, he'll do the dear boy no harm.

Hard. But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came?

Tony. It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in three hours was very good going. Hem. As to be sure it was. Hem. I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in, if you please. Hem.

Hard. But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and am resolved (*Raising his voice*) to find the other out.

Mrs. H. (Running forward from behind.) O lud, he'll murder my poor boy, my darling. Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman, spare my child, if you have any merey.

Hard. My wife! as I am a Christian? From whence can she come, or what does she mean?

Mrs. H. (Kneeling.) Take compassion on us, good Mr. Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice, indeed we wont, good Mr. Highwayman.

Hard. I believe the woman's out of her senses. What Dorothy don't you know me?

Mrs. H. Mr. Hardecastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home?—What has brought you to follow us?

Hard. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits. So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door. (*To Tony.*) This is one of your old

tricks, you graceless rogue you. (*To Mrs. H.*) Don't you know the gate and the mulberry-tree; and don't you remember the horsepond, my dear?

Mrs. H. Yes, I shall remember the horsepond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it. (*To Tony.*) And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this. I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

Tony. Ecod, mother, all the parish say you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't.

Mrs. H. I'll spoil you, I will.

[*Beats him off the Stage, L.H.*

Hard. Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit, L.H.*

SCENE III.—*A Parlour.*

Enter SIR CHARLES MARLOW and MISS HARD-CASTLE, L.H.

Sir. C. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

Miss. H. I am proud of your approbation, and to show I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

Sir. C. I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment. [*Exit, R.H.*

Enter MARLOW, L.H.

Mar. Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I, till this moment, know the pain I feel in the separation.

Miss H. (*In her own natural manner.*) I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by showing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

Mar. This girl every moment improves upon me. (*Aside.*) It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart, and nothing can restore me to

myself, but this painful effort of resolution.

Miss H. Then go, sir, I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as her's you came down to visit, and my education I hope not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fix'd on fortune.

*Enter HARDCASTLE and SIR CHARLES MARLOW
from behind, R.H.*

Mar. By heaven, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye for who could see that without emotion. But every moment that I converse with you, steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence, and conscious virtue. I'm now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

Miss H. Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity, but seriously, Mr. Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connection where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident address of a secure admirer?

Mar. (Kneeling.) Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue—

Sir C. I can hold it no longer. (*Coming forward.*) Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation?

Hard. Your cold contempt; your formal interview?

What have you to say now?

Mar. That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

Hard. It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure. That you can address a lady in private, and deny it in public; that you have one story for us, and another for my daughter.

Mar. Daughter!—this lady your daughter?

Hard. Yes, sir, my only daughter, my Kate. Whose else should she be?

Mar. Oh, the devil.

Miss H. Yes sir, that very identical, tall, squinting lady you were pleased to take me for. (*Curtesying.*) She that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the ladies' club, ha! ha! ha!

Mar. Zounds! there's no bearing this.

Miss H. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the loud, confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap, and old Miss Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning, ha! ha! ha!

Mar. O, curse on my noisy head! I never attempted to be impudent, yet, that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

Hard. By the hand of my body, but you shall not. I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Wont you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man.

(*They retire, she tormenting him to the back scene.*)

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE and TONY, L.H.

Mrs. H. So, so, they're gone off. Let them go, I care not.

Hard. Who's gone?

Mrs. H. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr. Hastings, from town; he who came down with our modest visitor here.

Sir C. Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

Hard. Then by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connection.

Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE, L.H.

Mrs. H. What, returned so soon, I begin not to like it. (*Aside.*)

Hast. (To Hardcastle.) For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back, to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

Miss N. Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I'm now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connection.

Hard. Be it what it will, I'm glad they are come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony, boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand whom I now offer you?

Tony. What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

Hard. While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret. But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare you have been of age these three months.

Tony. Of age! Am I of age, father?

Hard. Above three months.

Tony. Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. (*Taking Miss Neville's hand.*) Witness all men by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, esquire, of Blauk-place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constantia Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again.

Sir C. O brave squire !

Hast. My worthy friend ?

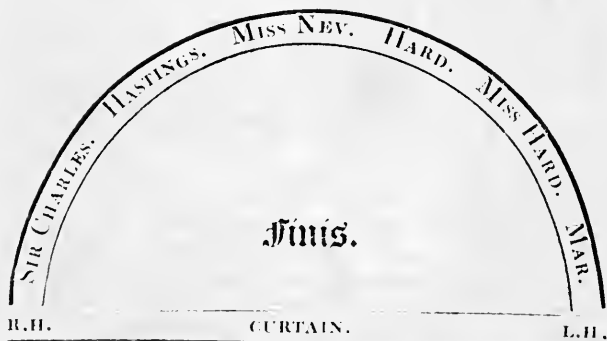
Mrs. H. My undutiful offspring ! (*Beats Tony off,*
R.H.)

Mar. Joy, my dear George, I give you joy sincerely. And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive, if you would return me the favour.

Hast. (*To Miss Hardcastle.*) Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him, I'm sure he loves you, and you must and shall have him.

Hard. (*Joining their hands.*) And I say so too. And, Mr. Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now to supper. To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the mistakes of the night shall be crowned with a merry morning ; so, boy, take her : and as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is, that you may never be mistaken in the wife.

Disposition of the Characters when the Curtain falls.



EPILOGUE.

Well, having stoop'd to conquer with success,
And gain'd a husband, without aid from dress,
Still as a bar-maid I could wish it too,
As I have conquer'd him, to conquer you :
And let me say, for all your resolution,
That pretty bar-maids have done execution.
Our life is all a play, compos'd to please,
“ We have our exits and our entrances.”
The first act shows the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of every thing afraid ;
Blushes when hir'd, and with unmeaning action,
“ She hopes as how to give you satisfaction.”
Her second act displays a livelier scene—
The unblushing bar-maid of a country inn .
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,
Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters.
Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,
The chop-house toast of ogling connoisseurs ;
On squires and eits she there displays her arts,
And on the gridiron broils her lovers' hearts—
And as she smiles, her triumph to complete,
Even common-councilmen forget to eat.
The fourth act shows her wedded to the squire,
And madam now begins to hold it higher ;
Pretends to taste, at operas cries *caro*,
And quits her Nancy Dawson for *Che Faro* ;
Dotes upon dancing, and in all her pride,
Swims round the room, the *Heinel* of Cheapside ;
Ogles and leers with artificial skill,
Till having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards, and ogles at spadille.
Such through our lives the eventful history—
The fifth and last act still remains for me.
The bar-maid now for your protection prays,
Turns female barrister, and pleads for Bayes.

Oxberry's Edition.

VENICE PRESERVED,

A TRAGEDY;

BY

Thomas Otway.

WITH PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY MARKED WITH
THE STAGE BUSINESS, AND STAGE DIRECTIONS,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatres Royal.

BY W. OXBERRY, Comedian.

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Remarks.

BIGOTRY is not confined to religious opinions ; there is a bigotry of politics, of poetry, of science, and of art, and wherever it occurs, it is distinguished by the same ferocious, narrow spirit, the same devotion to itself, and utter abhorrence of all without it ; above all things it dreads innovation of any kind, however requisite and however plausible in appearance ; we know therefore well what to expect in offering our opinions upon *Otway*, for they unfortunately are at variance with those generally entertained ; we think that his merits have been much overrated, and cannot consent to give up our ideas, though they want the sanction of the world.

There are no doubt many poetical passages in “*Venice Preserved*,” but not one of transcendent excellence, not one that the memory loves to dwell upon, not one that becomes, as it were, a part of our habitual thinking ; yet many such passages may be found in the neglected *Ford* and *Webster*, and not a few in *Decker*. Nay, the general tone of this play is prosaic ; it is indeed measured, but there is neither poetry of thought nor of expression ; it is prose without the variety of prose ; there is no distinction of language in the different speakers ; the blustering of *Pierre* and the whining of *Jaffier* are in the same tone, and that by no means an agreeable one. As a specimen of this prose in fetters, the following lines, not selected, but taken at random, may be offered :

“ *Ren.* You, Durand, with your thousand must possess
St. Mark’s ; you, captain, know your charge already ;
’Tis to secure the ducal palace.
Be all this done with the least tumult possible,
’Till in each place you post sufficient guards :
Then sheathe your swords in every breast you meet.

Jaf. Oh! reverend cruelty! damn'd bloody villain!

Ren. During this execution, Durand, you
Must in the midst keep your battalia fast;
And, Theodore, be sure to plant the cannon
That may command the streets;
This done, we'll give the general alarm,
Apply petards, and force the arse'nal gates;
Then fire the city round in several places,
Or with our cannon (if it dare resist)
Batter to ruin."

Again:—

"*Spin.* Let us all draw our swords, and search the house,
Pull him from the dark hole where he sits brooding
O'er his cold fears, and each man kill his share of him."

This last idea of each man killing his share is sufficiently ludicrous, but let it pass.

In the plot and characters there is a want of variety; indeed there is very little more than the main action to fill up the five acts; we see *Pierre* but in one relation, as a conspirator, *Jaffier* but as a lover, *Belvidera* but as—we know not what—a nothing.—After all too the principal character, *Pierre*, is a copy from Shakspeare's *Cassius*, but how inferior to the original; *Cassius* does not flit before us like a shadow; he is with us bodily; the very depths of his mind are disclosed, and that not by description but by action and the peculiar expression of his thoughts; his soliloquies upon *Brutus*, his utter reckless defiance of the storm which seems to shake the world, and sever the laws of nature, his suspicion in regard to *Anthony*, his quarrel with *Brutus*, his doubts before the battle, and finally his death, all tend to bring out the character with wonderful truth and energy. We do not mean to impute it as a fault to *Otway* that he is inferior to Shakspeare, for who has equalled him? but we only meant to illustrate our opinions by the comparison?

Much has been said about *Otway's* pathos; that he does possess this power is true, but most assuredly not in the degree or of the kind which is usually supposed: he is not so pathetic as *Ford*, he is not so pathetic as *Webster*; *Shakspeare* of course is left out of the

question; in the scene between *Jaffier* and *Belvidera*, when the former is about to stab his wife, there is great pathos of *situation*, but very little of language. In the last scene also there is the same merit and the same defect; the situation is eminently pathetic, the language is worse than nothing; it is the language of delirium, not of madness, two maladies totally distinct from each other; to imagine situations of distress, however acute, is no difficult thing, to give appropriate speech to them is indeed a task for genius, but this genius *Otway* had not; he had little power over language, and though he may be a great writer, is certainly not a great poet.

And here we are tempted to give one short extract from *Webster*; it is exquisitely beautiful, and will serve to show we have not spoken at random. First, however, we should premise that the subject leading to the lines is briefly this; the *Duchess of Malfy* marries her steward, and her brothers, in revenge, by several horrid schemes, endeavour to break her heart; finding all the efforts to this end ineffectual, they cause her to be strangled by their agent *Bosola*—the deed is done—*Ferdinand* enters.

“*Fer.* Is she dead?

Bos. She is what you would have her.

Fix your eye here.

Fer. Constantly.

Bos. Do you not weep?

Other sins only speak, murder shrieks out;

The element of water moistens the earth,

But blood flies upwards, and bedews the heavens.

Fer. Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle—she died young.

Bos. I think not so; her infelicity

Seem'd to have years too many.

Fer. She and I were twins;

And should I die this instant, I had lived

Her time to a minute.”

This is indeed pathos and the sublime of poesy: how exquisitely beautiful the reluctance of *Bosola* to name his deed; he can not say she is dead—“She is what you would have her.”—How touching the relenting speeches of *Ferdinand*—“She died young”—and his remark that they were twins. For our own parts, we do not envy

those who can read this extract with dry eyes, if indeed it be possible to any one ; language so simple, yet at the same time so poetical and energetic, is no where to be found but in *Ford* and that immortal genius which leaves behind it all human efforts at a hopeless distance. But *Webster* lived in a happy period ; there were neither newspapers nor Scotch critics, who damn every attempt at strong writing by the name of German and melo-dramatic horrors.

Thomas Otway was the son of the Rev. Mr. Humphrey Otway, rector of Wolbeding, in Sussex, and was born at Trotton in that county, the 3d of March, in the year 1651. He received his education at Wickham school, near Winchester, and became a commoner of Christ Church, in Oxford, in 1669. But on his quitting the university, in 1674, and coming to London, he turned player. His success as an actor was but indifferent, having made only one attempt in Mrs. Behn's tragedy of "The Forced Marriage ; or, Jealous Bridegroom." He was more valued for the sprightliness of his conversation and the acuteness of his wit ; which gained him the friendship of the Earl of Plymouth, who procured him a cornet's commission in the troops which then served in Flanders. After this, he had recourse to writing for the stage ; and now it was that he found out the only employment that nature seemed to have fitted him for. After experiencing many reverses of fortune, in regard to his circumstances, but generally changing for the worse, he at last died wretchedly in a house, known by the sign of the Bull, on Tower-hill, April 14, 1685, whither he had retired to avoid the pressure of his creditors. Some have said, that downright hunger compelling him to fall too eagerly upon a piece of bread, of which he had been some time in want, the first mouthful choked him, and instantly put a period to his days.

His dramatic writings are :—"Aleibiades," Trag. 4to. 1675.—"Don Carlos, Prince of Spain," T. 4to. 1676.—"Titus and Berenice," T. 4to. 1677.—"The Cheats of Scapin," F. 4to. 1677.—"Friendship in Fashion," C. 4to. 1678.—"Caius Marius," T. 4to. 1680, 1692.—"The Orphan," T. 4to. 1680.—"The Soldier's Fortune," C. 4to. 1681.—"Venice Preserved," T. 4to. 1682.—"The Atheist ; or, The Second Part of the Soldier's Fortune," C. 4to. 1684.

PROLOGUE.

In these distracted times, when each man dreads
The bloody stratagems of busy heads;
When we have fear'd three years we know not what,
'Till witnesses begin to die o' the rot,
What made our poet meddle with a plot?
Was't that he fancied for the very sake
And name of plot, his trifling play might take?
For there's not in't one inch-board evidence,
But 'tis, he says, to reason plain and sense,
And that he thinks a plausible defence.
Were truth by sense and reason to be tried;
Sure all our swearers might be laid aside.
No, of such tools our author has no need,
To make his plot, or make his play succeed:
He, of black bills has no prodigious tales,
Or Spanish pilgrims cast ashore in Wales;
Here's not one murther'd magistrate at least,
Kept rank, like ven'son for a city feast;
Grown four days stiff, the better to prepare
And fit his pliant limbs to ride in chair:
Yet here's an army rais'd, tho' under ground,
But no man seen, nor one commission found.
Here is a traitor too, that's very old,
Turbulent, subtle, mischievous, and bold,
Bloody, revengeful, and to crown his part,
Loves fumbling with a wench with all his heart;
'Till after having many changes past,
In spite of age (thanks t' heav'n) is hang'd at last.

Next is a senator, that keeps a whore ;
In Venice none a higher office bore ;
To lewdness every night the lecher ran—
Show me, all London, such another man ;
Match him at mother Creswold's, if you can.
O, Poland ! Poland ! had it been thy lot,
T' have heard in time of this Venetian plot ;
Thou surely chosen hadst one king from thence,
And honour'd them as thou hast England since.

Costume.

PRIULI.

Black velvet doublet, breeches and robe, trimmed with jet buttons, and black braid, black shoes, roses, and silk stockings.

JAFFIER.

Black velvet doublet and breeches, black satin vest, trimmed, black silk braid, and jet buttons, black satin scarf, black shoes, roses, and silk stockings, vandyke, black hat, and plume of ostrich feathers, black sword.

PIERRE.

1st Dress.—Jacket and pantaloons of buff kerseymere, blue Venetian fly. 2nd Dress.—Ornamented richly with silver, black hat, plume of scarlet ostrich feathers, pair of buff gauntlets, russet boots, scarlet roquelaure, and sword.

BEDAMER.

Blue doublet and breeches trimmed with gold, russet boots, black hat, and plume of feathers.

DUKE.

Crimson velvet dress, with robe richly embroidered with gold.

RENAULT.

Black velvet doublet, breeches, and cloak embroidered with gold.

CONSPIRATORS.

In different coloured richly embroidered Venetian dresses.

GUARDS.

In grey doublets, breeches, and grey hats.

SENATORS.

Black gowns with ermine capes, small black caps trimmed with ermine.

BELVIDERA.

1st Dress.—Black velvet dress trimmed with gold, black and gold drapery—2nd Dress.—White muslin, do. do. Drapery.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

	<i>Drury-lane.</i>	<i>Covent-garden.</i>
<i>Duke of Venice</i>	Mr. Carr.	Mr. Atkins.
<i>Priuli</i>	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Egerton.
<i>Jaffier</i>	Mr. Rae.	Mr. C. Kemble.
<i>Pierre</i>	Mr. H. Johnston.	Mr. Young.
<i>Renault</i>	Mr. R. Phillips.	Mr. Chapman.
<i>Spinosa</i>	Mr. Miller.	Mr. Claremont.
<i>Captain of the Guard</i>	Mr. Marshall.	Mr. Jeffries.
<i>Officer</i>	Mr. Cooke.	Mr. Treby.
<i>Elliot</i>	Mr. Kent.	Mr. Comer.
<i>Theodore</i>	Mr. Coveney.	Mr. King.
<i>Mezzana</i>	Mr. Buxton.	Mr. George.
<i>Durand</i>	Mr. Ebsworth.	Mr. Grant.
<i>Belvidera</i>	Mrs. Bartley	Miss O'Neill.

The time this piece takes in representation is about two hours and thirty-six minutes.—The first act occupies the space of twenty-eight minutes—the second, twenty-five—the third, thirty-six—the fourth, thirty-five—and the fifth, thirty-two.—The half price commences generally about a quarter before nine o'clock.

Stage Directions.

By R. H.	is meant,	Right Hand.
L. H.		Left Hand.
S. E.		Second Entrance.
U. E.		Upper Entrance.
M. D.		Middle Door.
D. F.		Door in Flat.
R. H. D.		Right Hand Door.
L. H. D.		Left Hand Door.

VENICE PRESERVED.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Venice.*

Enter PRIULI and JAFFIER L.H.

Pri. No more ! I'll hear no more ! Be gone and leave me.

Jaf. Not hear me ! By my sufferings but you shall !
My lord, my lord ! I'm not that abject wretch
You think me. Patience ! where's the distance throws
Me back so far, but I may boldly speak
In right, though proud oppression will not hear me ?

Pri. Have you not wrong'd me ?

Jaf. Could my nature e'er
Have brook'd injustice, or the doing wrongs
I need not now thus low have bent myself
To gain a hearing from a cruel father.
Wrong'd you ?

Pri. Yes, wrong'd me ! In the nicest point,
The honour of my house, you've done me wrong.
You may remember (for I now will speak,
And urge its baseness) when you first came home
From travel, with such hopes as made you look'd on,
By all men's eyes, a youth of expectation ;
Pleas'd with your growing virtue, I receiv'd you ;
Court'd, and sought to raise you to your merits ;
My house, my table, nay, my fortune too,
My very self was yours ; you might have us'd me

To your best service ; like an open friend
 I treated, trusted you, and thought you mine :
 When, in requital of my best endeavours,
 You treacherously practis'd to undo me ;
 Seduc'd the weakness of my age's darling,
 My only child, and stole her from my bosom.
 Oh Belvidera !

Jaf. 'Tis to me you owe her :
 Childless you had been else, and in the grave
 Your name extinct ; no more Priuli heard of.
 You may remember, scarce five years are past,
 Since in your brigantine you sail'd to see
 The Adriatic wedded by our duke ;*
 And I was with you: your unskilful pilot
 Dash'd us upon a rock ; when to your boat
 You made for safety : enter'd first yourself ;
 Th' affrighted Belvidera following next,
 As she stood trembling on the vessel's side,
 Was, by a wave, wash'd off into the deep ;
 When instantly I plung'd into the sea,
 And buffeting the billows to her rescue,
 Redeem'd her life with half the loss of mine.
 Like a rich conquest, in one hand I bore her,
 And with the other dash'd the saucy waves,
 That throng'd and press'd to rob me of my prize.
 I brought her, gave her to your despairing arms :
 Indeed you thank'd me ; but a nobler gratitude
 Rose in her soul : for from that hour she lov'd me,
 Till for her life she paid me with herself.

Pri. You stole her from me ; like a thief you stole
 her,
 At dead of night ! that cursed hour you chose
 To rife me of all my heart held dear.
 May all your joys in her prove false, like mine ;
 A sterile fortune, and a barren bed,

* It was an annual custom among the Venetians to form a naval procession, and the Doge at their head, threw a ring into the Adriatic, as a kind of marriage or agreement, that the seas should be obedient to his will.

Attend you both ; continual discord make
Your days and nights bitter and grievous ; still
May the hard hand of a vexatious need
Oppress and grind you ; till at last you find
The curse of disobedience all your portion.

Jaf. Half of your curse you have bestow'd in vain :
Heav'n has already crown'd our faithful loves
With a young boy, sweet as his mother's beauty :
May he live to prove more gentle than his grandsire,
And happier than his father.

Pri. Rather live
To bait thee for his bread, and din your ears
With hungry cries ; whilst his unhappy mother
Sits down and weeps in bitterness of want.

Jaf. You talk as if 'twould please you.

Pri. 'Twould, by heav'n !

Jaf. Would I were in my grave !

Pri. And she too with thee :

For, living here, you're but my curst remembrancers,
I once was happy.

Jaf. You use me thus, because you know my soul
Is fond of Belvidera. You perceive
My life feeds on her, therefore thus you treat me.
Oh ! could my soul ever have known satiety ;
Were I that thief, the doer of such wrongs
As you upbraid me with, what hinders me
But I might send her back to you with contumely,
And court my fortune where she would be kinder ?

Pri. You dare not do't.

Jaf. Indeed, my lord, I dare not.

My heart, that awes me, is too much my master :
Three years are past, since first our vows were plighted,
During which time, the world must bear me witness,
I've treated Belvidera like your daughter,
The daughter of a senator of Venice :
Distinction, place, attendance, and observance,
Due to her birth, she always has commanded.
Out of my little fortune I've done this ;
Because (though hopeless e'er to win your nature)

The world might see I lov'd her for herself;
Not as the heiress of the great Priuli.

Pri. No more.

Jaf. Yes, all, and then adieu for ever.
There's not a wretch, that lives on common charity,
But's happier than me : for I have known
The luscious sweets of plenty ; every night
Have slept with soft content about my head,
And never wak'd, but to a joyful morning ;
Yet now must fall, like a full ear of corn,
Whose blossom 'seap'd, yet's wither'd in the ripening.

Pri. Home, and be humble ; study to retrench ;
Discharge the lazy vermin of thy hall,
Those pageants of thy folly :
Reduce the glitt'ring trappings of thy wife
To humble weeds, fit for thy little state :
Then, to some suburb cottage both retire ;
Drudge to feed loathsome life ; get brats and starve—
Home, home, I say.— [Exit, R.H.]

Jaf. Yes, if my heart would let me—
This proud, this swelling heart : home I would go,
But that my doors are hateful to my eyes,
Fill'd and dam'd up with gaping creditors,
Watchful as fowlers when their game will spring.
I've now not fifty ducats in the world,
Yet still I am in love, and pleas'd with ruin.
Oh ! Belvidera ! Oh ! she is my wife—
And we will bear our wayward fate together,
But ne'er know comfort more.

Enter PIERRE, L.H.

Pier. My friend, good morrow,
How fares the honest partner of my heart ?
What, melancholy ! not a word to spare me ?

Jaf. I'm thinking, Pierre, how that damn'd starving
quality,
Call'd honesty, got footing in the world.

Pier. Why, powerful villany first set it up,

For its own ease and safety. Honest men
Are the soft easy cushions on which knaves
Repose and fatten. Were all mankind villains,
They'd starve each other; lawyers would want practice,
Cut-throats rewards: each man would kill his brother
Himself; none would be paid or hang'd for murder.
Honesty! 'twas a cheat invented first
To bind the hands of bold deserving rogues,
That fools and cowards might sit safe in power,
And lord it uncontrol'd above their betters.

Jaf. Then honesty is but a notion?

Pier. Nothing else;

Like wit, much talk'd of, not to be defin'd:
He that pretends to most, too, has least share in't.
'Tis a ragged virtue: Honesty! no more on't.

Jaf. Sure thou art honest!

Pier. So, indeed, men think me;
But they're mistaken, Jaffier: I'm a rogue
As well as they;
A fine, gay, bold-fac'd villain as thou seest me.
'Tis true, I pay my debts, when they're contracted
I steal from no man; would not cut a throat
To gain admission to a great man's purse,
Or a whore's bed; I'd not betray my friend
To get his place or fortune; I scorn to flatter
A blown-up fool above me, or crush the wretch be-
neath me;

Yet, Jaffier, for all this I'm a villain.

Jaf. A villain!

Pier. Yes, a most notorious villain;
To see the sufferings of my fellow creatures,
And own myself a man: to see our senators
Cheat the deluded people with a show
Of liberty, which yet they ne'er must taste of.
They say, by them our hands are free from fetters;
Yet whom they please they lay in basest bonds;
Bring whom they please to infamy and sorrow;
Drive us, like wrecks, down the rough tide of power,
Whilst no hold's left to save us from destruction.
All that bear this are villains, and I one,

Not to rouse up at the great call of nature,
And check the growth of these domestic spoilers,
That make us slaves, and tell us, 'tis our charter.

(*Crosses to R.II.*)

Jaf. I think no safety can be here for virtue,
And grieve, my friend, as much as thou, to live
In such a wretched state as this of Venice,
Where all agree to spoil the public good;
And villains fatten with the brave man's labours.

Pier. We've neither safety, unity, nor peace,
For the foundation's lost of common good;
Justice is lame, as well as blind, amongst us;
The laws (corrupted to their ends that make 'em)
Serve but for instruments of some new tyranny,
That ev'ry day starts up, t'enslave us deeper.
Now could this glorious cause but find out friends,
To do it right, oh, Jaffier! then might'st thou
Not wear these seals of woe upon thy face;
The proud Priuli should be taught humanity,
And learn to value such a son as thou art.
I dare not speak, but my heart bleeds this moment.

Jaf. Curs'd be the cause, though I thy friend be part
on't:

Let me partake the troubles of thy bosom,
For I am us'd to misery, and perhaps
May find a way to sweeten't to thy spirit.

Pier. Too soon 'twill reach thy knowledge—

Jaf. Then from thee
Let it proceed. There's virtue in thy friendship,
Would make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing,
Strengthen my constancy and welcome ruin.

Pier. Then thou art ruined!

Jaf. That I long since knew;
I and ill fortune have been long acquainted.

Pier. I pass'd this very moment by thy doors,
And found them guarded by a troop of villains;
The sons of public rapine were destroying.
They told me, by the sentence of the law,
They had commission to seize all thy fortune:
Nay more, Priuli's cruel hand had signed it.

Here stood a ruffian with a horrid face,
 Lording it o'er a pile of massy plate,
 Tumbled into a heap for public sale ;
 There was another, making villanous jests
 At thy undoing: he had ta'en possession
 Of all thy ancient, most domestic ornaments,
 Rich hangings intermix'd and wrought with gold;
 The very bed, which on thy wedding-night
 Receiv'd thee to the arms of Belvidera,
 The scene of all thy joys, was violated
 By the coarse hands of filthy dungeon villains,
 And thrown amongst the common lumber.

Jaf. Now thank heaven—

Pier. Thank heaven! for what?

Jaf. That I'm not worth a ducat.

Pier. Curse thy dull stars, and the worse fate of
 Venice,

Where brothers, friends, and fathers, all are false;
 Where there's no truth, no trust; where innocence
 Stoops under vile oppression, and vice lords it.
 Hadst thou but seen, as I did, how at last
 Thy beauteous Belvidera, like a wretch
 That's doom'd to banishment, came weeping forth,
 Shining through tears, like April suns in showers,
 That labour to o'ercome the cloud that loads 'em;
 Whilst two young virgins, on whose arms she lean'd,
 Kindly look'd up, and at her grief grew sad,
 As if they catch'd the sorrows that fell from her.
 Ev'n the lewd rabble, that were gather'd round
 To see the sight, stood mute when they beheld her;
 Govern'd their roaring throats, and grumbled pity.
 I could have hugg'd the greasy rogues: they pleas'd
 me. (*Crosses to L. II.*)

Jaf. I thank thee for this story, from my soul;
 Since now I know the worst that can befall me.
 Ah, Pierre! I have a heart that could have borne
 The roughest wrong my fortune could have done me;
 But when I think what Belvidera feels,
 The bitterness her tender spirit tastes of,
 I own myself a coward: bear my weakness:

If throwing thus my arms about thy neck,
 I play the boy, and blubber in thy bosom.
 Oh! I shall drown thee with my sorrows.

Pier. Burn,

First, burn and level Venice to thy ruin.
 What! starve, like beggars' brats, in frosty weather,
 Under a hedge, and whine ourselves to death!
 Thou or thy cause shall never want assistance,
 Whilst I have blood or fortune fit to serve thee:
 Command my heart, thou'rt every way its master.

Jaf. No, there's a secret pride in bravely dying.

Pier. Rats die in holes and corners, dogs run mad;
 Man knows a braver remedy for sorrow:
 Revenge, the attribute of gods; they stamp'd it,
 With their great image, on our natures. Die!
 Consider well the cause, that calls upon thee:
 And, if thou'rt base enough, die then. Remember,
 Thy Belvidera suffers; Belvidera!
 Die—damn first—What! be decently interr'd
 In a church-yard, and mingle thy brave dust
 With stinking rogues, that rot in winding-sheets,
 Surfeit-slain fools, the common dung o'th' soil!

Jaf. Oh!

Pier. Well said, out with't, swear a little—

Jaf. Swear! By sea and air; by earth, by heav'n,
 and hell,

I will revenge my Belvidera's tears.

Hark thee, my friend—Priuli—is—a senator.

Pier. A dog.

Jaf. Agreed.

Pier. Shoot him.

Jaf. With all my heart.

No more; where shall we meet at night?

Pier. I'll tell thee;

On the Rialto, every night at twelve,
 I take my evening's walk of meditation;
 There we two will meet, and talk of precious
 Mischief—

Jaf. Farewell.

Pier. At twelve.

Jaf. At any hour; my plagues
 Will keep me waking. [*Exit Pierre, R. H.*
 Tell me why, good heaven,
 Thou mad'st me, what I am, with all the spirit,
 Aspiring thoughts, and elegant desires,
 That fill the happiest man? Ah, rather, why
 Didst thou not form me sordid as my fate,
 Base-minded, dull, and fit to carry burthens?
 Why have I sense to know the curse that's on me?
 Is this just dealing, nature?—Belvidera!
 Poor Belvidera!

Enter BELVIDERA, L. H.

Bel. Lead me, lead me, my virgins,
 To that kind voice. My lord, my love, my refuge!
 Happy my eyes, when they behold thy face!
 My heavy heart will leave its doleful beating
 At sight of thee, and bound with sprightly joys.
 Oh smile! as when our loves were in their spring,
 And cheer my fainting soul.

Jaf. As when our loves
 Were in their spring! Has then our fortune chang'd?
 Art thou not Belvidera, still the same,
 Kind, good, and tender, as my arms first found thee?
 If thou art alter'd, where shall I have harbour?
 Where ease my loaded heart? Oh! where complain?

Bel. Does this appear like change, or love decaying,
 When thus I throw myself into thy bosom,
 With all the resolution of strong truth!
 Beats not my heart, as 'twould alarm thine
 To a new charge of bliss?—I joy more in thee,
 Than did thy mother, when she hugg'd thee first,
 And bless'd the gods for all her travail past.

Jaf. Can there in woman be such glorious faith?
 Sure all ill stories of thy sex are false!
 Oh woman! lovely woman! nature made thee
 To temper man: we had been brutes without you!
 Angels are painted fair to look like you:

'There's in you all that we believe of heaven;
Amazing brightness, purity, and truth,
Eternal joy, and everlasting love.

Bel. If love be treasure, we'll be wondrous rich;
I have so much, my heart will surely break with't:
Vows can't express it. When I would declare
How great's my joy, I'm dumb with the big thought;
I swell, and sigh, and labour with my longing.
O! lead me to some desert wide and wild,
Barren as our misfortunes, where my soul
May have its vent, where I may tell aloud
To the high heavens, and ev'ry list'ning planet,
With what a boundless stock my bosom's fraught;
Where I may throw my eager arms about thee,
Give loose to love, with kisses kindling joy,
And let off all the fire that's in my heart.

Jaf. Oh, Belvidera! doubly I'm a beggar:
Undone by fortune, and in debt to thee.
Want, worldly want, that hungry, meagre fiend,
Is at my heels, and chases me in view.
Canst thou bear cold and hunger? Can these limbs,
Fram'd for the tender offices of love,
Endure the bitter gripes of smarting poverty?
When banish'd by our miseries abroad
(As suddenly we shall be) to seek out
In some far climate, where our names are strangers,
For charitable succour; wilt thou then,
When in a bed of straw we shrink together,
And the bleak winds shall whistle round our heads;
Wilt thou then talk thus to me? Wilt thou then
Hush my cares thus, and shelter me with love?

Bel. Oh! I will love thee, even in madness love
thee;

Though my distracted senses should forsake me,
I'd find some intervals, when my poor heart
Should swage itself, and be let loose to thine.
Though the bare earth be all our resting-place,
Its roots our food, some cliff our habitation,
I'd make this arm a pillow for thine head;

And, as thou sighing ly'st, and swell'd with sorrow,
 Creep to thy bosom, pour the ba'm of love
 Into thy soul, and kiss thee to thy rest;
 Then praise our God, and watch thee till the morning.

Jaf. Hear this, you heav'ns! and wonder how you
 made her:

Reign, reign, ye monarchs that divide the world,
 Busy rebellion ne'er will let you know
 Tranquillity and happiness like mine!
 Like gaudy ships th' obsequious billows fall,
 And rise again to lift you in your pride;
 They wait but for a storm, and then devour you;
(*Crosses to L.H.*)

I, in my private bark already wreck'd,
 Like a poor merchant driven to unknown land,
 That had by chance pack'd up his choicest treasure
 In one dear casket, and sav'd only that;
 Since I must wander further on the shore,
 Thus hug my little, but my precious store,
 Resolv'd to scorn, and trust my fate no more.
[*Exeunt, L.H.*]

END OF ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Rialto.*

Enter JAFFIER, L.H.

Jaf. I'm here; and thus, the shades of night around
 me,
 I look as if all hell were in my heart,
 And I in hell. Nay surely 'tis so with me!—
 For every step I tread, methinks some fiend
 Knocks at my breast, and bids me not be quiet.
 I've heard how desperate wretches, like myself,
 Have wander'd out at this dead time of night,

To meet the foe of mankind in his walk.
 Sure I'm so curs'd that, though of heaven forsaken,
 No minister of darkness cares to tempt me.
 Hell, hell ! why sleep'st thou ?

Enter PIERRE, R.H.U.E.

Pier. Sure I've staid too long :
 The clock has struck, and I may lose my proselyte.
 Speak, who goes there ?

Jaf. A dog, that comes to howl
 At yonder moon. What's he that asks the question ?

Pier. A friend to dogs, for they are honest creatures,
 And ne'er betray their masters : never fawn
 On any that they love not. Well met, friend :
 Jaffier !

Jaf. The same.

Pier. Where's Belvidera ?—

Jaf. For a day or two
 I've lodg'd her privately, till I see further
 What fortune will do for me. Pr'ythee, friend,
 If thou wouldst have me fit to hear good counsel,
 Speak not of Belvidera—

Pier. Not of her !

Jaf. Oh, no !

Pier. Not name her ! May be I wish her well.

Jaf. Whom well ?

Pier. Thy wife ? thy lovely Belvidera.
 I hope a man may wish his friend's wife well,
 And no harm done ?

Jaf. Y'are merry, Pierre.

Pier. I am so :

Thou shalt smile too, and Belvidera smile :
 We'll all rejoice. Here's something to buy pins ;
 Marriage is chargeable. (*Gives him a Purse.*)

Jaf. I but half wish'd
 To see the devil, and he's here already. Well !
 What must this buy ? Rebellion, murder, treason ?
 Tell me, which way I must be damn'd for this.

Pier. When last we parted, we'd no qualms like these,

But entertain'd each other's thoughts like men
Whose souls were well acquainted. Is the world
Reform'd since our last meeting? What new miracles
Have happen'd? Has Priuli's heart relented?
Can he be honest?

Jaf. Kind heav'n, let heavy curses
Gall his old age; cramps, aches, rack his bones,
And bitterest disquiet ring his heart.
Oh! let him live, till life becomes his burden:
Let him groan under't long, linger an age
In the worst agonies and pangs of death,
And find its cause but late.

Pier. Nay, couldst thou not
As well, my friend, have stretch'd the curse to all
The senate round, as to one single villain?

Jaf. But curses stick not: could I kill with cursing,
By heaven I know not thirty heads in Venice
Should not be blasted. Senators should rot
Like dogs on dunghills. Oh! for a curse
To kill with!

(Crosses to R.H.)

Pier. Daggers, daggers are much better.

Jaf. Ha!

Pier. Daggers.

Jaf. But where are they?

Pier. Oh! a thousand

May be dispos'd of, in honest hands, in Venice.

Jaf. Thou talk'st in clouds.

Pier. But yet a heart, half wrong'd

As thine has been, would find the meaning, Jaffier.

Jaf. A thousand daggers, all in honest hands!
And have not I a friend will stick one here!

Pier. Yes, if I thought thou wert not cherish'd
T' a nobler purpose, I would be thy friend;
But thou hast better friends; friends whom thy wrongs
Have made thy friends; friends worthy to be call'd so.
I'll trust thee with a secret: There are spirits
This hour at work.—But as thou art a man,
Whom I have pick'd and chosen from the world,

Swear that thou wilt be true to what I utter ;
 And when I've told thee that which only gods,
 And men like gods, are privy to, then swear
 No chance or change shall wrest it from thy bosom.

Jaf. When thou wouldst bind me, is there need of
 oaths ?

For thou'rt so near my heart, that thou may'st see
 Its bottom, sound its strength and firmness to thee.
 Is coward, fool, or villain in my face ?
 If I seem none of these, I dare believe
 Thou wouldst not use me in a little cause,
 For I am fit for honour's toughest task,
 Nor ever yet found fooling was my province ;
 And for a villanous, inglorious enterprise,
 I know thy heart so well, I dare lay mine
 Before thee, set it to what point thou wilt.

Pier. Nay, 'tis a cause thou wilt be fond of, Jaffier ;
 For it is founded on the noblest basis ;
 Our liberties, our natural inheritance.
 There's no religion, no hypocrisy in't ;
 We'll do the business, and ne'er fast and pray for't ;
 Openly act a deed the world shall gaze
 With wonder at, and envy when 'tis done.

Jaf. For liberty !

Pier. For liberty, my friend.
 Thou shalt be freed from base Priuli's tyranny,
 And thy sequester'd fortune's healed again :
 I shall be free from those opprobrious wrongs
 That press me now, and bend my spirit downward ;
 All Venice free, and every growing merit
 Succeed to its just right : fools shall be pull'd
 From wisdom's seat : those baleful, unclean birds,
 Those lazy owls, who, perch'd near fortune's top,
 Sit only watchful with their heavy wings
 To cuff down new-sledg'd virtues, that would rise
 To nobler heights, and make the grove harmonious.

(*Crosses to R.H.*)

Jaf. What can I do ?

Pier. Canst thou not kill a senator ?

Jaf. Were there one wise or honest, I could kill him,
 For herding with that nest of fools and knaves.
 By all my wrongs, thou talk'st as if revenge
 Were to be had; and the brave story warns me.

Pier. Swear then!

Jaf. I do, by all those glittering stars,
 And yon great ruling planet of the night;
 By all good pow'rs above, and ill below;
 By love and friendship, dearer than my life,
 No pow'r or death shall make me false to thee.

Pier. Here we embrace, and I'll unlock my heart.
 A council's held hard by, where the destruction
 Of this great empire's hatching: there I'll lead thee.
 But be a man! for thou'rt to mix with men
 Fit to disturb the peace of all the world,
 And rule it when its wildest—

Jaf. I give thee thanks
 For this kind warning. Yes, I'll be a man;
 And charge thee, Pierre, whene'er thou seest my fears
 Betray me less, to rip this heart of mine
 Out of my breast, and show it for a coward's.
 Come, let's be gone, for from this hour I chase
 All little thoughts, all tender human follies
 Out of my bosom: Vengeance shall have room:
 Revenge!

Pier. And liberty!

Jaf. Revenge—revenge— [Exeunt, R.H.]

SCENE II.—*Aquilina's House.*

Enter RENAULT, L.H.

Ren. Why was my choice ambition? the worst
 ground
 A wretch can build on! It's, indeed, at distance,
 A goodly prospect, tempting to the view;
 The height delights us, and the mountain top
 Looks beautiful, because it's high to heav'n.

But we ne'er think how sandy's the foundation,
 What storm will batter, and what tempest shake us.
 Who's there?

Enter SPINOSA, L.H.

Spin. Renault, good morrow, for by this time
 I think the scale of night has turn'd the balance,
 And weighs up morning? Has the clock struck twelve?

Pen. Yes! clocks will go as they are set; but man,
 Irregular man's ne'er constant, never certain:
 I've spent at least three precious hours of darkness
 In waiting dull attendance: 'tis the curse
 Of diligent virtue to be mix'd, like mine,
 With giddy tempers, souls but half resolv'd.

Spin. Hell seize that soul amongst us it can frighten.

Ren. What's then the cause that I'm here alone?
 Why are not we together?

Enter ELLIOTT, L.H.

O, sir, welcome!
 You are an Englishman; when treason's hatching,
 One might have thought you'd not have been behind-
 hand.

In what whore's lap have you been lolling?
 Give but an Englishman his whore and ease,
 Beef, and a sea-coal fire, he's yours for ever.

Ell. Frenchman, you are saucy.

Ren. How! (*Puts his hand to his sword.*)

Enter BEDAMAR, DURAND, BRAMVEIL, THEODORE, the Ambassador; BRABE, REVILLIDO, MEZZANA, TERNON, and RETROSI, Conspirators, L.H.—Spinosa is endeavouring to pacify Elliot; Bedamar goes behind Elliot and Spinosa.

Bed. At difference, fie!
 Is this a time for quarrels? Thieves and rogues
 Fall out and brawl: should men of your high calling,

Men separated by the choice of Providence
 From the gross heap of mankind, and set here
 In this assembly as in one great jewel,
 T' adorn the bravest purpose it e'er smil'd on;
 Should you, like boys, wrangle for trifles?

Ren. Boys.

Bed. Renault, thy hand.

Ren. I thought I'd given my heart
 Long since to every man that mingles here;
 But grieve to find it trusted with such tempers,
 That can't forgive my froward age its weakness.

Bed. Elliott, thou once hadst virtue. I have seen
 Thy stubborn temper bent with godlike goodness,
 Not half thus courted. 'Tis thy nation's glory
 To hug the foe that offers brave alliance.

*(They advance in front of Bedemar, give their
 hands, and return to their former situations.)*

One more embrace, my friends—we'll all embrace.
 United thus, we are the mighty engine
 Must twist this rooted empire from its basis.
 Totters not it already?

Ell. Would 'twere tumbling.

Bed. Nay, it shall down; this night we seal its ruin.

Enter PIERRE, L.H.—(All bow to him.)

Oh, Pierre, thou art welcome. *(Crosses to Pierre.)*
 Come to my breast, for by its hopes thou look'st
 Lovely dreadful, and the fate of Venice
 Seems on thy sword already. Oh, my Mars!
 The poets that first feign'd a god of war,
 Sure prophesied of thee.

Pier. Friend, was not Brutus
 (I mean that Brutus, who in open senate
 Stabb'd the first Caesar that usurp'd the world,)
 A gallant man?

Ren. Yes, and Cataline too;
 Though story wrong his fame: for he conspir'd
 To prop the reeling glory of his country:
 His cause was good.

Bed. And ours as much above it,
(*Crosses to Renault.*)

As, Renault, thou'rt superior to Cethegus,
Or Pierre to Cassius.

Pier. Then to what we aim at.
When do we start? or must we talk for ever?

Bed. No, Pierre, the deed's near birth; fate seems
to have set

'The business up, and given it to our care;
I hope there's not a heart or hand amongst us,
But is firm and ready.

All. All.

We'll die with Bedamar.

Bed. O men,
Matchless! as will your glory be hereafter:
'The game is for a matchless prize, if won;
If lost, disgraceful ruin.

Pier. Ten thousand men are armed at your nod,
Commanded all by leaders fit to guide
A battle for the freedom of the world:
'This wretched state has starv'd them in its service;
And, by your bounty quicken'd, they're resolved
To serve your glory, and revenge their own:
'They've all their different quarters in this city,
Watch for th' alarm, and grumble 'tis so tardy.

Bed. I doubt not, friend, but thy unwearied diligence
Has still kept waking, and it shall have ease;
After this night it is resolv'd we meet
No more, till Venice owns us for her lords.

Pier. How lovely the Adriatic whore,
Dress'd in her flames, will shine! Devouring flames!
Such as shall burn her to the watery bottom,
And hiss in her foundation.

Bed. Now if any
Amongst us, that owns this glorious cause,
Have friends or interest he'd wish to save,
Let it be told: the general doom is seal'd;
But I'd forego the hopes of a world's empire,
Rather than wound the bowels of my friend.

Pier. I must confess, you there have touch'd my weakness,

I have a friend ; hear it ! such a friend,
My heart was ne'er shut to him. Nay, I'll tell you :
He knows the very business of this hour ;
But he rejoices in the cause, and loves it ;
We've chang'd a vow to live and die together,
And he's at hand to ratify it here.

(All start, and look at each other.)

Ren. How ! all betray'd !

Pier. No—I've nobly dealt with you ;
I've brought my all into the public stock :
I've but one friend, and him I'll share amongst you :
Receive and cherish him ; or if, when seen
And search'd, you find him worthless : as my tongue
Has lodg'd this secret in his faithful breast,
To ease your fears, I wear a dagger here
Shall rip it out again, and give you rest.
Come forth, thou only good I e'er could boast of.

Enter JAFFIER, with a Dagger, L.H.D.—

(All bow to him.)

Bed. His presence bears the show of manly virtue.

Jaf. I know you'll wonder all, that thus uncall'd,
I dare approach this place of fatal councils ;
But I'm amongst you, and by heav'n it glads me
To see so many virtues thus united
To restore justice, and dethrone oppression.
Command this sword, if you would have it quiet,
Into this breast ; but, if you think it worthy

(Renault, Elliott, and Spinosa, observe Jaffier narrowly.)

To cut the throats of reverend robes,
Send me into the curs'd assembled senate :
It shrinks not, though I meet a father there.
Would you behold this city flaming ? here's
A hand shall bear a lighted torch at noon
To th' arsenal, and set its gates on fire.

Ren. You talk this well, sir.

Jaf. Nay—by heav'n I'll do this.
Come, come, I read distrust in all your faces;
You fear me villain, and, indeed, its odd
To hear a stranger talk thus, at first meeting,
Of matters that have been so well debated;
But I come ripe with wrongs, as you with councils.
I hate this senate, am a foe to Venice;
A friend to none, but men resolv'd like me
To push on mischief. Oh! did you but know me,
I need not talk thus!

Bed. Pierre, I must embrace him.

*(Advances to Jaffier, embraces him, and returns
to his former situation.)*

My heart beats to this man, as if it knew him.

Ren. I never lov'd these huggers.

Jaf. Still I see
The cause delights ye not. Your friends survey me
As I were dangerous—But I come arm'd
Against all doubts, and to your trust will give
A pledge, worth more than all the world can pay for.
My Belvidera. Hoa; my Belvidera!

Bed. What wonder's next?

Jaf. Let me entreat you,
As I have henceforth hopes to call you friends,
That all but the ambassador, and this
Grave guide of councils, with my friend that owns me,
Withdraw awhile to spare a woman's blushes.

(Bedamar signs to them to retire.)

*[Exeunt all but Bedamar, Renault, Jaffier, and
Pierre, R.H.]*

Bed. Pierre, whither will this ceremony lead us?

Jaf. My Belvidera! Belvidera!

Bel. *(within, L.H.)* Who,
Who calls so loud at this late peaceful hour?
That voice was wont to come in gentle whispers,
And fill my ears with the soft breath of love.

Enter BELVIDERA, L.H.D.

Thou hourly image of my thoughts, where art thou ?

Jaf. Indeed 'tis late.

Bel. Alas ! where am I ? whither is't you lead me ?
Methinks I read distraction in your face,
Something less gentle than the fate you tell me.
You shake and tremble too ! your blood runs cold !
Heav'n's guard my love, and bless his heart with patience.

Jaf. That I have patience, let our fate bear witness,
Who has ordain'd it so, that thou and I
(Thou, the divinest good man e'er possess'd,
And I, the wretched'st of the race of man)
This very hour, without one tear, must part.

Bel. Part ! must we part ? Oh, am I then forsaken ?
Why drag you from me ? (*Jaffier crosses to Pierre.*)

Whither are you going ?

My dear ! my life ! my love !

(*Following him, and falling on her knees.*)

Jaf. Oh, friends !

Bel. Speak to me.

Jaf. Take her from my heart,
She'll gain such hold else, I shall ne'er get loose.
I charge thee take her, but with tender'st care
Relieve her troubles, and assuage her sorrows.

Ren. Rise, madam, and command amongst your servants.

(*Ren. at her R.H. and Bel. L.H. raise her up.*)

Jaf. To you, sirs, and your honours, I bequeath her ;

And with her this, when I prove unworthy—

(*Gives a dagger to Renault.*)

You know the rest—Then strike it to her heart ;

And tell her, he who three whole happy years

Lay in her arms, and each kind night repeated

The passionate vows of still increasing love,

Sent that reward for all her truth and sufferings.

Bel. Nay, take my life, since he has sold it cheaply.

Oh ! thou unkind one ;
Never meet more ! have I deserv'd this from you ?
Look on me, tell me, speak, thou fair deceiver—
Why am I separated from thy love ?
If I am false, accuse me ; but if true,
Don't, pr'ythee don't, in poverty forsake me :
But pity the sad heart that's torn with parting.
Yet hear me, yet recall me—

[*Exeunt Renault, Bedamar, and Belvidera, L.H.*

Jaf. Oh ! my eyes,
Look not that way, but turn yourselves awhile
Into my heart, and be wean'd altogether.
My friend, where art thou ?

Pier. Here, my honour's brother.

Jaf. Is Belvidera, gone ?

Pier. Renault has led her

Back to her own apartment ; but, by heav'n,
Thou must not see her more, till our work's over.

Jaf. No !

Pier. Not for your life.

Jaf. Oh, Pierre ! wert thou but she,
How I would pull thee down into my heart,
Gaze on thee, till my eye-strings crack'd with love ;
Then, swelling, sighing, raging to be blest,
Come like a panting turtle to thy breast ;
On thy soft bosom hovering, bill and play,
Confess the cause why last I fled away ;
Own 'twas a fault, but swear to give it o'er,
And never follow false ambition more. [*Exeunt, R.H.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber.**Enter BELVIDERA, L.H.*

Bel. I'm sacrific'd! I'm sold! betray'd to shame!
Inevitable ruin has enclos'd me!
He that should guard my virtue has betray'd it;
Left me! undone me! Oh, that I could hate him!
Where shall I go? Oh, whither, whither, wander?

Enter JAFFIER, R.H.

Jaf. Can Belvidera want a resting-place,
When these poor arms are ready to receive her?
There was a time——

Bel. Yes, yes, there was a time,
When Belvidera's tears, her cries, and sorrows,
Were not despis'd; when, if she chanc'd to sigh,
Or look'd but sad—there was indeed a time,
When Jaffier would have ta'en her in his arms,
Eas'd her declining head upon his breast,
And never left her till he found the cause.

Jaf. Oh, Portia, Portia! What a soul was thine!

Bel. That Portia was a woman; and when Brutus,
Big with the fate of Rome, (heav'n guard thy safety!)
Conceal'd from her the labours of his mind;
She let him see her blood was great as his,
Flow'd from a spring as noble, and a heart
Fit to partake his troubles as his love.
Fetch, fetch that dagger back, the dreadful dower,
'Thou gav'st last night in parting with me; strike it
Here to my heart; and as the blood flows from it,
Judge if it run not pure, as Cato's daughter's.

(Crosses to R.H.)

Jaf. Oh! Belvidera!

Bel. Why was I last night deliver'd to a villain?

Jaf. Ha! a villain?

Bel. Yes, to a villain! Why at such an hour Meets that assembly, all made up of wretches? Why, I in this hand, and in that a dagger, Was I deliver'd with such dreadful ceremonies? To you, sirs, and to your honours, I bequeath her, And with her this: Whene'er I prove unworthy— You know the rest—then strike it to her heart. Oh! why's that rest conceal'd from me? Must I Be made the hostage of a hellish trust? For such I know I am; that's all my value. But, by the love and loyalty I owe thee, I'll free thee from the bondage of the slaves; Straight to the senate, tell 'em all I know, All that I think, all that my fears inform me.

Jaf. Is this the Roman virtue; this the blood That boasts its purity with Cato's daughter? Would she have e'er betray'd her Brutus?

Bel. No:
For Brutus trusted her. Wert thou so kind,
What would not Belvidera suffer for thee?

Jaf. I shall undo myself, and tell thee all.
Yet think a little, ere thou tempt me further;
Think I've a tale to tell will shake thy nature,
Melt all this boasted constancy thou talk'st of,
Into vile tears and despicable sorrows:
Then if thou shouldst betray me!—

Bel. Shall I swear!

Jaf. No, do not swear: I would not violate
Thy tender nature with so rude a bond:
But as thou hop'st to see me live my days,
And love thee long, look this within thy breast:
I've bound myself, by all the strictest sacraments,
Divine and human——

Bel. Speak!

Jaf. To kill thy father——

Bel. My father!

Jaf. Nay, the throats of the whole senate
Shall bleed, my Belvidera. He, amongst us,
That spares his father, brother, or his friend,
Is damn'd.

Bel. Oh!

Jaf. Have a care, and shrink not even in thought :
For, if thou dost——

Bel. I know it; thou wilt kill me.

Do, strike thy sword into this bosom : lay me
Dead on the earth, and then thou wilt be safe.
Murder my father ! though his cruel nature
Has persecuted me to my undoing ;
Driven me to basest wants ; can I behold him,
With smiles of vengeance, butcher'd in his age ?
The sacred fountain of my life destroy'd ?
And canst thou shed the blood that gave me being ?
Nay, be a traitor too, and sell thy country ?
Can thy great heart descend so vilely low,
Mix with hir'd slaves, bravoës, and common stabbers ?
Join with such a crew, and take a ruffian's wages,
To cut the throats of wretches as they sleep ?

Jaf. Thou wrong'st me, Belvidera ! I've engaged
With men of souls ; fit to reform the ills
Of all mankind : there's not a heart amongst them
But's stout as death, yet honest as the nature
Of man first made, ere fraud and vice were fashion.

Bel. What's he, to whose curst hands last night thou
gav'st me ?

Was that well done ? Oh ! I could tell a story,
Would rouse thy lion heart out of its den,
And make it rage with terrifying fury.

Jaf. Speak on, I charge thee.

Bel. O, my love ! If e'er

Thy Belvidera's peace deserv'd thy care,
Remove me from this place. Last night, last night !

Jaf. Distract me not, but give me all the truth.

Bel. No sooner wert thou gone, and I alone,
Left in the pow'r of that old son of mischief ;
No sooner was I laid on my sad bed,
But that vile wretch approach'd me ! Then my heart
Throbb'd with its fears : Oh, how I wept and sigh'd !
And shrunk and trembled ! wish'd in vain for him
That should protect me ! Thou, alas ! wer't gone.

Jaf. Patience, sweet heav'n, 'till I make vengeance sure.

Bel. He drew the hideous dagger forth, thou gav'st him,

And with upbraiding smiles, he said, Behold it :

This is the pledge of a false husband's love :

And in my arms then press'd, and would have clasp'd me ;

But with my cries, I scar'd his coward heart,

Till he withdrew, and mutter'd vows to hell.

These are thy friends! with these thy life, thy honour,

Thy love, all stak'd, and all will go to ruin.

Jaf. No more : I charge thee keep this secret close.

Clear up thy sorrows ; look as if thy wrongs

Were all forgot, and treat him like a friend,

As no complaint were made. No more ; retire,

Retire, my life, (*Bel. crosses to L.H.*) and doubt not of my honour ;

I'll heal its failings, and deserve thy love.

Bel. Oh! should I part with thee, I fear thou wilt

In anger leave me, and return no more.

Jaf. Return no more ! I would not live without thee Another night, to purchase the creation.

Bel. When shall we meet again ?

Jaf. Anon, at twelve,

I'll steal myself to thy expecting arms :

Come like a travell'd dove, and bring thee peace.

Bel. Indeed !

Jaf. By all our loves.

Bel. 'Tis hard to part :

But sure no falsehood ever look'd so fairly.

Farewell ; remember twelve.

[*Exit L.H.D.*

Jaf. Let heav'n forget me,

When I remember not thy truth, thy love.

Enter PIERRE, R.H.

Pier. Jaffier.

Jaf. Who calls?

Pier. A friend, that could have wish'd
T' have found thee otherwise employed. What, hunt
A wife, on the dull soil! Sure a staunch husband
Of all hounds is the dullest. Wilt thou never,
Never be wean'd from caudles and confections?
What feminine tales hast thou been list'ning to,
Of unair'd shirts, catarrhs, and toothach, got
By thin-sol'd shoes? Damnation! that a fellow,
Chosen to be a sharer in the destruction
Of a whole people, should sneak thus into corners
To ease his fulsome lusts, and fool his mind.

Jaf. May not a man then trifle out an hour
With a kind woman, and not wrong his calling?

Pier. Not in a cause like ours.

Jaf. Then, friend, our cause
Is in a damn'd condition: for I'll tell thee,
That cankerworm, call'd lechery, has touch'd it;
'Tis tainted vilely. Wouldst thou think it? Renault
(That mortify'd, old, wither'd, winter rogue)
He visited her last night, like a kind guardian:
Faith! she has some temptation, that's the truth on't.

Pier. He durst not wrong his trust.

Jaf. 'Twas something late, though,
To take the freedom of a lady's chamber.

Pier. Was she in bed?

Jaf. Yes, faith, in virgin sheets,
White as her bosom, Pierre, dish'd neatly up,
Might tempt a weaker appetite to taste.
Oh! how the old fox stunk, I warrant thee,
When the rank fit was on him!

Pier. Patience guide me!
He us'd no violence?

Jaf. No, no; out on't, violence!
Play'd with her neck; brush'd her with his grey beard;
But not a jot of violence.

Pier. Damn him.

Jaf. Ay, so say I: but hush, no more on't.
All hitherto is well, and I believe
Myself no monster yet: Sure it is near the hour
We all should meet for our concluding orders:
Will the ambassador be here in person?

Pier. No, he has sent commission to that villain,
Renault,
To give the executing charge:
I'd have thee be a man, if possible,
And keep thy temper; for a brave revenge
Ne'er comes too late.

Jaf. Fear not, I am cool as patience.

Pier. He's yonder, coming this way through the
hall;
His thoughts seem full.

Jaf. Pr'ythee retire, and leave me
With him alone: I'll put him to some trial;
See how his rotten part will bear the touching.

Pier. Be careful, then. [*Exit PIERRE, R.H.*]

Jaf. Nay, never doubt, but trust me.
What! be a devil, take a damning oath
For shedding native blood! Can there be a sin
In merciful repentance? Oh, this villain!
(*Retires up the stage.*)

Enter RENAULT, L.H.

Ren. Perverse and peevish: What a slave is man
To let his rebel passions master him!
Dispatch the tool her husband—that were well.
Who's there? (*Jaff. advances R.H.*)

Jaf. A man.

Ren. My friend, my near ally,
The hostage of your faith, my beauteous charge, is very
well.

Jaf. Sir, are you sure of that?
Stands she in perfect health? Beats her pulse even;
Neither too hot nor cold?

Ren. What means that question?

Jaf. Oh ! women have fantastic constitutions,
Inconstant in their wishes, always wavering,
And never fix'd. Was it not boldly done,
Even at first sight, to trust the thing I lov'd
(A tempting treasure too) with youth so fierce
And vigorous as thine ? but thou art honest.

Ren. Who dares accuse me ?

Jaf. Curs'd be he that doubts
Thy virtue ! I have try'd it, and declare,
Were I to choose a guardian of my honour,
I'd put it in thy keeping : for I know thee.

Ren. Know me !

Jaf. Ay, know thee. There's no falsehood in thee :
Thou look'st just as thou art. Let us embrace.
Now would'st thou cut my throat, or I cut thine ?

Ren. You dare not do't.

Jaf. You lie, sir. (*A noise without.*)

Ren. How !

Jaf. No more,
'Tis a base world, and must reform, that's all.

*Enter SPINOSA, ELLIOTT, THEODORE, DURAND,
REVILLIDO, BROMVELL, and the rest of the Con-
spirators.*

Ren. Spinosa ! Theodore !

Spin. The same.

Ren. You are welcome.

Spin. You are trembling, sir.

Ren. 'Tis a cold night, indeed, and I am aged ;
Full of decay and natural infirmities : (*They retire.*)

Re-enter PIERRE, R.H.

We shall be warm, my friends, I hope, to-morrow.

Pier. 'Twas not well done ; thou shouldst have
stroak'd him,
And not have gall'd him.

Jaf. Damn him, let him chew on't.

(*Crosses to L.H.*)

Heav'n! where am I? beset with cursed fiends,
 That wait to damn me! What a devil's man,
 When he forgets his nature (*Conspirators advance L.H.*)
 ——hush, my heart.

Ren. My friends, 'tis late; are we assembled all?
 To-morrow's rising sun must see you all
 Deck'd in your honours. Are the soldiers ready?

Pier. (R.H.) All, all.

Ren. You, Durand, with your thousand, must possess

St. Mark's; you, captain, know your charge already;
 'Tis to secure the ducal palace:

Be all this done with the least tumult possible,
 'Till in each place you post sufficient guards:

Then sheathe your swords in every breast you meet.

Jaf. Oh! reverend cruelty! damn'd bloody villain!
 (*Aside.*)

Ren. During this execution, Durand, you
 Must in the midst keep your battalia fast;
 And, Theodore, be sure to plant the cannon
 That may command the streets;
 This done, we'll give the general alarm,
 Apply petards, and force the ars'nal gates;
 Then fire the city round in several places,
 Or with our cannon (if it dare resist)
 Batter to ruin. But above all I charge you,
 Shed blood enough; spare neither sex nor age,
 Name nor condition: if there live a senator
 After to-morrow, though the dullest rogue
 That e'er said nothing, we have lost our ends.
 If possible, let's kill the very name
 Of senator, and bury it in blood.

Jaf. Merciless, horrid slave—Ay, blood enough!
 Shed blood enough, old Renault! how thou charm'st
 me! (*Aside.*)

Ren. But one thing more, and then farewell, till fate
 Join us again, or separate us for ever.

Let's all remember,

We wear no common cause upon our swords:

Let each man think that on his single virtue

Depends the good and fame of all the rest ;
Eternal honour, or perpetual infamy.

(*Advancing from the circle.*)

You droop, sir. (*To Jaffier.*)

Jaf. No ; with most profound attention . . .
I've heard it all, and wonder at thy virtue.

Oh, Belvidera ! take me to thy arms,
And show me where's my peace, for I have lost it.
(*Aside.*) [Exit L.H.D.]

Ren. Without the least remorse then, let's resolve
With fire and sword t' exterminate these tyrants ;
Under whose weight this wretched country labours,
The means are only in our hands to crown them.

Pier. And may those pow'rs above that are propitious
To gallant minds, record this cause and bless it.

Ren. Thus happy, thus secure of all we wish for,
Should there, my friends, be found among us one
False to this glorious enterprise, what fate,
What vengeance, were enough for such a villain ?

Ell. Death here without repentance, hell hereafter.

Ren. Let that be my lot, if, as here I stand,
Listed by fate among her darling sons,
Though I had one only brother, dear by all
The strictest ties of nature ; could I have such a friend
Join'd in this cause, and had but ground to fear
He meant foul play ; may this right hand drop from
me,

If I'd not hazard all my future peace,
And stab him to the heart before you. Who,
Who would do less ? Wouldst thou not, Pierre, the
same ?

Pier. You've singled me, sir, out for this hard question,

As if it were started only for my sake !
Am I the thing you fear ? Here, here's my bosom,
Search it with all your swords. Am I a traitor ?

Ren. No : but I fear your late commended friend
Is little less. Come, sirs, 'tis now no time
To trifle with our safety. Where's this Jaffier ?

Spin. He left the room just now, in strange disorder.

Ren. Nay, there is danger in him: I observ'd him; During the time I took for explanation, He was transported from most deep attention To a confusion which he could not smother; His looks grew full of sadness and surprise, All which betray'd a wavering spirit in him, That labour'd with reluctancy and sorrow. What's requisite for safety, must be done With speedy execution: he remains Yet in our power: I, for my own part, wear A dagger— (*Taking out the dagger Jaf. gave him.*)

Pier. Well.

Ren. And I could wish it——

Pier. Where?

Ren. Buried in his heart.

Pier. Away; (*Takes the dagger from him, and puts it in his pocket, and crosses to L.H.*)
we're yet all friends,

No more of this, 'twill breed ill blood among us.

Spin. Let us all draw our swords, and search the house,

Pull him from the dark hole where he sits brooding
O'er his cold fears, and each man kill his share of him.

Pier. Who talks of killing? (*Crosses to Spin. who is R.H. then turns to Ell. then to Theo. then to Ren.*) Who's he'll shed the blood

That's dear to me? Is't you, or you, or you, sir?

What, not one speak! how you stand gaping all

On your grave oracle, your wooden god there!

Yet not a word! Then, sir, I'll tell you a secret;

Suspicion's but at best a coward's virtue. (*To Renault.*)

Ren. A coward! (*Handles his sword.*)

Pier. Put up thy sword, old man;

Thy hand shakes at it. Come, let's heal this breach;
(*Crosses to L.H.*)

I am too hot, we yet may all live friends.

Spin. Till we are safe, our friendship cannot be so.

Pier. Again! Who's that?

Spin. 'Twas I.

Theo. And I.

Ren. And I.

Omnes. And all.

Ren. Who are on my side?

Spin. Every honest sword.

Let's die like men, and not be sold like slaves.

Pier. One such word more, by heav'n, I'll to the senate,

And hang ye all, like dogs, in clusters.

(They half draw their swords.)

Why peep your coward swords half out their shells?

Why do you not all brandish them like mine?

You fear to die, and yet dare talk of killing.

Ren. Go to the senate, and betray us! haste!

Secure thy wretched life; we fear to die

Less than thou dar'st be honest. *(Going, R.H.)*

Pier. That's rank falsehood.

(Crosses to Renault, and seizes his left arm.)

Fear'st thou not death! Fie, there's a knavish itch

In that salt blood, an utter foe to smarting.

Had Jaffier's wife proved kind, he'd still been true.

Faugh, how that stinks! thou die, thou kill my friend!

Or thou! or thou! with that lean wither'd face.

Away, *(Crosses to L.H.)* disperse all to your several charges,

And meet to-morrow where your honour calls you.

I'll bring that man whose blood you so much thirst for,

And you shall see him venture for you fairly—

Hence! hence, I say! *[Exit Renault, angrily, R.H.]*

Spin. I fear we've been to blame.

And done too much.

Theo. 'Twas too far urg'd against the man you lov'd.

Rev. Here, take our swords and crush them with your feet.

Spin. Forgive us, gallant friend.

Pier. Nay, now you've found

The way to melt, and cast me as you will.

Whence arose all this discord?

Oh, what a dangerous precipice have we 'scap'd !
 How near a fall was all we'd long been building !
 What an eternal blot had stain'd our glories,
 If one, the bravest and the best of men,
 Had fall'n a sacrifice to rash suspicion,
 Butcher'd by those whose cause he came to cherish !
 Come but to-morrow, all your doubts shall end,
 And to your loves me better recommend,
 That I've preserv'd your fame, and sav'd my friend.
[Exeunt Pierre, L.H the rest, R.H.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Rialto.*

Enter JAFFIER and BELVIDERA, L.H.

Jaf. Where dost thou lead me? Every step I move,
 Methinks I tread upon some mangled limb
 Of a rack'd friend. Oh, my charming ruin !
 Where are we wandering ?

Bel. To eternal honour.
 To do a deed shall chronicle thy name
 Among the glorious legends of those few
 That have sav'd sinking nations. Thy renown
 Shall be the future song of all the virgins,
 Who by thy piety have been preserv'd
 From horrid violation. Every street
 Shall be adorn'd with statues to thy honour ;
 And at thy feet this great inscription written,
 " Remember him that propp'd the fall of Venice."

Jaf. Rather, remember him, who, after all
 The sacred bonds of oaths, and holier friendship,
 In fond compassion to a woman's tears,

Forgot his manhood, virtue, truth, and honour,
To sacrifice the bosom that reliev'd him.
Why wilt thou damn me?

Bel. Oh, inconstant man!
How will you promise; how will you deceive!
Do, return back, replace me in my bondage,
Tell all thy friends how dangerously thou lov'st me,
And let thy dagger do its bloody office.
Or if thou think'st it nobler, let me live,
Till I'm a victim to the hateful lust
Of that infernal devil.
Last night, my love!

Jaf. Name, name, it not again:
It shows a beastly image to my fancy,
Will wake me into madness.
Destruction, swift destruction
Fall on my coward head if I forgive him!

Bel. Delay no longer then, but to the senate,
And tell the dismal'st story ever ut'er'd:
Tell 'em what blood-hed, rapines, desolations,
Have been prepar'd: how near's the fatal hour.
Save thy poor country, save the reverend blood
Of all its nobles, which to-morrow's dawn
Must else see shed.

Jaf. Oh! think what then may prove my lot:
By all heav'n's powers, prophetic truth dwells in thee;
For every word thou speak'st strikes through my
heart;
Just what thou'st made me, take me, Belvidera,
And lead me to the place where I'm to say
This bitter lesson; where I must betray
My truth, my virtue, constancy, and friends.
Must I betray my friend? Ah! take me quickly:
Secure me well before that thought's renew'd;
If I relapse once more, all's lost for ever.

Bel. Hast thou a friend more dear than Belvidera?

Jaf. No: thou'rt my soul itself; wealth, friendship,
honour,
All present joys, and earnest of all future,
Are summ'd in thee.

Come, lead me forward, now, like a tame lamb
 To sacrifice. Thus, in his fatal garlands
 Deck'd fine and pleas'd, the wanton skips and plays,
 Trots by th' enticing, flatt'ring priestess' side,
 And much transported with its little pride,
 Forgets his dear companions of the plain :
 Till, by her bound, he's on the altar lain,
 Yet then too hardly bleats, such pleasure's in the pain.

Enter OFFICER, and six Guards, R.H.

Off. Stand! who goes there?

Bel. Friends.

Off. But what friends are you?

Bel. Friends to the senate, and the state of Venice.

Off. My orders are to seize on all I find
 At this late hour, and bring 'em to the council,
 Who are now sitting.

Jaf. Sir, you shall be obey'd. (*Crosses to centre.*)
 Now the lot's cast, and fate, do what thou wilt.

[*Exeunt, guarded, R.H.*]

SCENE II.—*The Senate-house, where appear sitting the DUKE OF VENICE, PRIULI, and other Senators.*

Duke. Antony, Priuli, senators of Venice,
 Speak, why are we assembled here this night?
 What have you to inform us of, concerns
 The state of Venice's honour, or its safety?

Pri. (n.u.) Could words express the story I've to
 tell you,
 Fathers, these tears were useless, these sad tears
 That fall from my old eyes; but there is cause
 We all should weep, tear of these purple robes,
 And wrap ourselves in sackcloth, sitting down
 On the sad earth, and cry aloud to heav'n:
 Heav'n knows, if yet there be an hour to come
 Ere Venice be no more.

All Sen. How!

Pri. Nay, we stand
Upon the very brink of gaping ruin.
Within this city's formed a dark conspiracy,
To massacre us all, our wives and children,
Kindred and friends, our palaces and temples
To lay in ashes : nay, the hour too fix'd ;
The swords, for ought I know, drawn e'en this moment,
And the wild waste begun. From unknown hands
I had this warning ; but, if we are men,
Let's not be tamely butcher'd, but do something
That may inform the world, in after ages,
Our virtue was not ruin'd, though we were.

(A noise without.)

Capt. Room, room, make room for some prisoners—
(Within, L.H.)

Enter OFFICER and Guards, L.H.D.

Duke. Speak, there. What disturbance ?

Offi. Two prisoners have the guards seiz'd in the
street,

Who say, they come t' inform this reverend council
About the present danger.

All Sen. Give em entrance—*(Officer goes to L.H.D.
then enter Jaffier, Captain, and Guards.)*

Well, who are you ?

*(The Captain and Guards proceed behind the
Duke's chair round to R.H. where they remain
the Officer waits L.H. between Jaffier and the
Duke.)*

Jaf. A villain,
Would every man, that hears me,
Would deal so honestly, and own his title.

Duke. 'Tis rumour'd, that a plot has been con-
triv'd
Against this state ; and you've a share in't too.
If you are a villain, to redeem your honour
Unfold the truth, and be restor'd with mercy.

Jaf. Think not, that I to save my life came hither;
 I know its value better; but in pity
 To all those wretches whose unhappy dooms
 Are fix'd and seal'd. You see me here before you,
 The sworn and covenanted foe of Venice:
 But use me as my dealings may deserve,
 And I may prove a friend.

Duke. The slave capitulates,
 Give him the tortures.

Jaf. That you dare not do;
 Your fear won't let you, not the longing itch
 To hear a story which you dread the truth of:
 Truth, which the fear of smart shall ne'er get from me.
 Cowards are scar'd with threat'nings; boys are whipt
 Into confessions; but a steady mind
 Acts of itself, ne'er asks the body's counsel.
 Give him the tortures! Name but such a thing
 Again, by heav'n I'll shut these lips for ever.
 Not all your racks, your engines, or your wheels,
 Shall force a groan away, that you may guess at.

Duke. Name your conditions.

Jaf. For myself full pardon,
 Besides the lives of two-and-twenty friends,
 Whose names are here enroll'd—Nay, let their crimes,
 Be ne'er so monstrous, I must have the oaths
 And sacred promises of this reverend council,
 That, in a full assembly of the senate
 The thing I ask be ratified. Swear this,
 And I'll unfold the secret of your danger.

Duke. Propose the oath.

Jaf. By all the hopes
 Ye have of peace and happiness hereafter,
 Swear.—Ye swear?

All Sen. We swear. (*All the council bow.*)

Jaf. And, as ye keep the oath,
 May you and your posterity be blest'd,
 Or curs'd for ever.

All Sen. Else be curs'd for ever. (*They bow again.*)

Jaf. Then here's the list, and with't the full dis-
 close

Of all that threatens you.

(Delivers a paper to the Officer who gives it to the Duke.)

Now, fate, thou hast caught me.

Duke. Give order that all diligent search be made
To seize these men, their characters are public ;

(The Duke gives the first paper to the Officer.)

The paper intimates their rendezvous
To be at the house of a fam'd Grecian courtesan,
Call'd Aquilina ; see that place secur'd.
You, Jaffier, must with patience bear till morning
To be our prisoner.

Jaf. Would the chains of death
Had bound me safe, ere I had known this minute.

Duke. Captain, withdraw your prisoner.

Jaf. Sir, if possible, *(Crosses to Capt. R.H.)*
Lead me where my own thoughts themselves may
lose me ;

Where I may doze out what I've left of life,
Forget myself, and this days guilt and falsehood.
Cruel remembrance, how shall I appease thee ?

[Exit guarded, R.H.D.]

Offi. (Without) More traitors ; room, room, make
room, there.

Duke. How's this ? guards !
Where are your guards ? Shut up the gates, the trea-
son's
Already at our doors.

Enter OFFICER, L.H.

Offi. My lords, more traitors,
Seiz'd in the very act of consultation ;
Furnish'd with arms and instruments of mischief.
Bring in the prisoners.

Enter ELLIOTT, THEODORE, RENAULT, REVILLIDO, PIERRE, and other Conspirators, in fetters, L.H.D.

Pier. (L.H.) You, my lords, and fathers
(As you are pleas'd to call yourselves) of Venice ;
If you sit here to guide the course of justice,
Why these disgraceful chains upon the limbs
That have so often labour'd in your service ?
Are these the wreaths of triumph ye bestow
On those that bring you conquest home, and honours ?

Duke. Go on ; you shall be heard, sir.

Ant. And be hang'd too, I hope.

Pier. Are these the trophies I've deserv'd for
fighting
Your battles with confederated powers ?
When winds and seas conspir'd to overthrow you ;
And brought the fleets of Spain to your own harbours ;
When you, great Duke, shrunk trembling in your
palace,
And saw your wife, the Adriatic, plough'd,
Like a lewd whore, by bolder prow than yours ;
Stepp'd not I forth, and taught your loose Venetians
The task of honour, and the way to greatness ?
Rais'd you from your capitulating fears
To stipulate the terms of sued-for peace ?
And this my recompense ! If I'm a traitor,
Produce my charge ; or show the wretch that's base
And brave enough to tell me I'm a traitor.

Duke. Know you one Jaffier ?

(*Conspirators murmur.*)

Pier. Yes, and know his virtue.
His justice, truth, his general worth, and sufferings,
From a hard father taught me first to love him.

Enter JAFFIER guarded, R.H.D.

Duke. See him brought forth.

Pier. My friend too bound ! nay then

Our fate has conquer'd us, and we must fall.
Why droops the man whose welfare's so much mine,
They're but one thing? These reverend tyrants,

Jaffier,

Call us traitors, art thou one, my brother?

Jaf. To thee I am the falsest, veriest slave,
That e'er betray'd a generous, trusting friend,
And gave up honour to be sure of ruin.
All our fair hopes which morning was t' have crown'd,
Has this curst tongue o'erthrown.

Pier. So, then all's over:
Venice has lost her freedom, I my life.
No more! Farewell!

Duke. Say; will you make confession
Of your vile deeds, and trust the senate's mercy?

Pier. Curs'd be your senate! curs'd your constitution:

The curse of growing factions and divisions,
Still vex your councils, shake your public safety,
And make the robes of government you wear
Hateful to you, as these base chains to me.

Duke. Pardon, or death?

Pier. Death! honourable death!

Ren. Death's the best thing we ask, or you can
give,
No shameful bonds, but honourable death.

Duke. Break up the council. Captain, guard your
prisoners.

Jaffier, you're free, but these must wait for judgment.

(The Captain takes off Jaffier's chains.—The Duke and Council go away through the arch.—The Conspirators, all but Jaffier and Pierre, go off guarded, L.H.D.)

Pier. Come, where's my dungeon? Lead me to my
straw:

It will not be the first time I've lodg'd hard
To do the senate service.

Jaf. Hold, one moment.

Pier. Who's he disputes the judgment of the senate?
Presumptuous rebel—*(Strikes Jaf.)*—on—*(To Offi.)*

Jaf. By heav'n, you stir not !
 I must be heard ; I must have leave to speak.
 Thou hast disgrac'd me, Pierre, by a vile blow :
 Had not a dagger done thee nobler justice ?
 But use me as thou wilt, thou can'st not wrong me ;
 For I am fallen beneath the basest injuries :
 Yet look upon me with an eye of mercy,
 With pity and with charity behold me :
 And as there dwells a godlike nature in thee,
 Listen with mildness to my supplications.

Pier. What whining monk art thou ? what holy
 cheat,
 That would'st encroach upon my credulous ears,
 And cant'st thus vilely ? Hence ! I know the not :
 Leave, hypocrite.

Jaf. Not know me, Pierre ?

Pier. No, I know thee not ! What art thou ?

Jaf. Jaffier, thy friend, thy once lov'd, valu'd friend !
 Though now deservedly scoru'd, and us'd most hardly.

Pier. Thou, Jaffier ! thou, my once lov'd, valu'd
 friend !

By heavens, thou liest ! the man so call'd, my friend,
 Was generous, honest, faithful, just, and valiant ;
 Noble in mind, and in his person lovely ;
 Dear to my eyes, and tender to my heart :
 But thou, a wretched, base, false, worthless coward,
 Poor even in soul, and loathsome in thy aspect ;
 All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest thee.
 Pr'ythee avoid ; nor longer cling thus round me,
 Like something baneful, that my nature's chill'd at.

Jaf. I have not wrong'd thee, by these tears I have
 not.

Pier. Hast thou not wrong'd me ? Dar'st thou call
 thyself
 That once lov'd, valu'd friend of mine,
 And swear thou hast not wrong'd me ? Whence these
 chains ?

Whence the vile death which I may meet this moment ?
 Whence this dishonour, but from thee, thou false one ?

Jaf. All's true, yet grant one thing, and I've done
 asking.

Pier. What's that?

Jaf. To take thy life, on such conditions
The counsel have propos'd : thou and thy friends,
May yet live long, and to be better treated.

Pier. Life ! ask my life ! confess ! record myself
A villain, for the privilege to breathe !
And carry up and down this cursed city,
A discontented and repining spirit,
Burthensome to itself, a few years longer ;
To lose it, may be at last, in a lewd quarrel
For some new friend, treacherous and false as thou art !
No, this vile world and I have long been jangling,
And cannot part on better terms than now,
When only men, like thee, are fit to live in't.

Jaf. By all that's just—

Pier. Swear by some other powers,
For thou hast broke that sacred oath too lately.

Jaf. Then, by that hell I merit, I'll not leave thee,
Till, to thyself, at least thou'rt reconcil'd,
However thy resentment deal with me.

Pier. Not leave me !

Jaf. No, thou shalt not force me from thee.
Use me reproachfully, and like a slave ;
Tread on me, buffet me, heap wrongs on wrongs
On my poor head ; I'll bear it all with patience
Shall weary out thy most unfriendly cruelty :
Lie at thy feet, and kiss 'em though they spurn me,
Till wounded by my sufferings, thou relent,
And raise me to thy arms, with dear forgiveness.

Pier. Art thou not—

Jaf. What?

Pier. A traitor?

Jaf. Yes.

Pier. A villain?

Jaf. Granted.

Pier. A coward, a most scandalous coward ;
Spiritless, void of honour ; one who has sold
Thy everlasting fame, for shameless life?

Jaf. All, all and more, much more : my faults are
numberless.

Pier. And would'st thou have me live on terms like thine?

Base, as thou art false—

Jaf. No: 'tis to me that's granted:
The safety of thy life was all I aim'd at,
In recompense for faith and trust so broken.

Pier. I scorn it more, because preserv'd by thee;
And, as when first my foolish heart took pity
On thy misfortunes, sought thee in thy miseries,
Reliev'd thy wants, and rais'd thee from the state
Of wretchedness, in which thy fate had plung'd thee,
To rank thee in my list of noble friends;
All I receiv'd, in surety for thy truth,
Were unreguarded oaths, and this, this dagger,
Giv'n with a worthless pledge, thou since hast stol'n:
So I restore it back to thee again;
Swearing by all those powers which thou hast violated,
Never, from this curst hour, to hold communion,
Friendship, or interest, with thee, though our years
Were to exceed those limited the world.
Take it—farewell—for now I owe thee nothing.

Jaf. Say, thou wilt live then.

Pier. For my life, dispose it
Just as thou wilt, because 'tis what I'm tir'd with.

Jaf. Oh, Pierre!

Pier. No more.

Jaf. My eyes won't lose sight of thee,
But languish after thee, and ache with gazing.

Pier. Leave me—Nay then thus, thus I throw thee
from me;
And curses, great as is thy falsehood, catch thee.

[*Exit, guarded, R.H.*]

Jaf. Amen.

He's gone, my father, friend, preserver,
And here's the portion he has left me:

(*Holds the Dagger up.*)

This dagger. Well remember'd! with this dagger,
I gave a solemn vow, of dire importance;
Parted with this, and Belvidera together.
Have a care, mem'ry, drive that thought no farther:

No, I'll esteem it as a friend's last legacy;
Treasure it up within this wretched bosom,
Where it may grow acquainted with my heart,
That when they meet, they start not from each other.
So, now for thinking—A blow, call'd a traitor, villain,
Coward, dishonourable coward; fough!
Oh! for a long sound sleep, and so forget it.
Down, busy devil!

Enter BELVIDERA, L.H.D.

Bel. Whither shall I fly?

Where hide me and my miseries together?
Where's now the Roman constancy I boasted?
Sunk into trembling fears and desperation,
Not daring to look up to that dear face
Which us'd to smile, ev'n on my faults; but, down,
Bending these miserable eyes on earth,
Must move in penance, and implore much mercy.

Jaf. Mercy! kind heav'n has surely endless stores,
Hoarded for thee, of blessings yet untasted:
Oh, Belvidera! I'm the wretched'st creature
E'er crawl'd on earth.

My friend too, Belvidera, that dear friend,
Who, next to thee, was all my health rejoic'd in,
Has us'd me like a slave, shamefully us'd me:
'Twould break thy pitying heart to hear the story.

Bel. What has he done?

Jaf. Before we parted,
Ere yet his guards had led him to his prison,
Full of severest sorrows for his sufferings,
With eyes o'erflowing, and a bleeding heart,
As at his feet I kneeled and su'd for mercy;
With a reproachful hand he dash'd a blow:
He struck me, Belvidera! by heav'n he struck me!
Buffetted, call'd me traitor, villain, coward.
Am I a coward? Am I a villain? Tell me:
Thou'rt the best judge, and mad'st me, if I am so!
Damnation! Coward!

Bel. Oh! forgive him, Jaffier;
And, if his sufferings wound thy heart already,
What will they do to-morrow?

Jaf. Ah!

Bel. To-morrow,
When thou shalt see him stretch'd in all the agonies
Of a tormenting and a shameful death;
His bleeding bowels, and his broken limbs,
Insulted o'er, by a vile, butchering villain;
What will thy heart do then? Oh! sure 'twill stream,
Like my eyes now.

Jaf. What means thy dreadful story?
Death, and to-morrow!

Bel. The faithless senators, 'tis they've decreed it:
They say, according to our friends' request,
They shall have death, and not ignoble bondage:
Declare their promis'd mercy all as forfeited:
False to their oaths, and deaf to intercession,
Warrants are pass'd for public death to-morrow.

Jaf. Death! doom'd to die! condemn'd unheard!
unpleaded!

Bel. Nay, cruel'st racks and torments are preparing
To force confession from their dying pangs.
Oh! do not look so terribly upon me!
How your lips shake, and all your face disorder'd!
What means my love?

Jaf. Leave me, I charge thee, leave me—Strong
temptations
Wake in my heart.

Bel. For what?

Jaf. No more, but leave me.

Bel. Why,

Jaf. Oh! by heav'n, I love thee with that fondness,
I would not have thee stay a moment longer
Near these curs'd hands: Are they not cold upon thee.
(*Pulls the Dagger half out of his Bosom, and puts it
back again.*)

Bel. No, everlasting comfort's in thy arms.
To lean thus on thy breast, is softer ease

Than downy pillows, deck'd with leaves of roses.

Jaf. Alas ! thou think'st not of the thorns 'tis fill'd with :

Fly, ere they gall thee. There's a lurking serpent,
Ready to leap and sting thee to the heart :
Art thou not terrified ?

Bel. No.

Jaf. Call to mind

What thou hast done, and whither thou hast brought me.

Bel. Hah !

Jaf. Where's my friend ? my friend, thou smiling mischief !

Nay, shrink not, now 'tis too late ; thou shoudst have fled
When thy guilt first had cause ; for dire revenge
Is up, and raging for my friend. He groans !
Hark, how he groans ! his screams are in my ears !
Already, see, they've fixed him on the wheel,
And now they tear him—Murder ! Perjur'd senate !
Murder—Oh !—Hark thee, traitress, thou hast done this,
Thanks to thy tears and false persuading love.
How her eyes speak ! Oh, thou bewitching creature !

(Feeling for his Dagger.)

Madness can't hurt thee. Come, thou little trembler,
Creep even into my heart, and there lie safe :
'Tis thy own citadel—Hah—yet stand off.
Heav'n must have justice, and my broken vows
Will sink me else beneath its reaching mercy.
I'll wink, and then 'tis done—

Bel. What means the lord

Of me, my life, and love ? What's in thy bosom,
Thou grasp'st at so ? Nay, why am I thus treated ?

(Draws the Dagger and offers to stab her.)

Jaf. Know, Belvidera, when we parted last,
I gave this dagger with thee, as in trust,
To be thy portion if I e'er prov'd false.
On such condition, was my truth believ'd :
But now 'tis forfeited, and must be paid for.

(Offers to stab her again.)

Bel. Oh ! Mercy !

(Kneeling.)

Jaf. Nay, no struggling.

Bel. Now then, kill me.

(*Leaps on his Neck, and kisses him.*)

Jaf. I am, I am a coward ; witness heav'n,
Witness it, earth, and every being witness :
'Tis but one blow ! yet by immortal love,
I cannot longer bear a thought to harm thee.

(*He throws away the Dagger and embraces her.*)

The seal of Providence is sure upon thee :
And thou wert born for unheard-of wonders.
Oh ! thou wert either born to save or damn me !—
By all the power that's giv'n thee o'er my soul,
By thy resistless tears and conquering smiles,
By the victorious love that still waits on thee,
Fly to thy cruel father, save my friend,
Or all our future quiet's lost for ever.
Fall at his feet, cling round his reverend knees,
Speak to him with thy eyes, and with thy tears,
Melt his hard heart, and wake dead nature in him,
Crush him in th' arms, torture him with thy softness ;
Nor, till thy prayers are granted, set him free,
But conquer him, as thou hast conquer'd me.

[*Exeunt, Bel. L.H.D. Jaf. R.H.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT. V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Priuli's House.*

Enter PRIULI, R.H.

Pri. Why, cruel heav'n, have my unhappy days
Been lengthen'd to this sad one ? Oh ! dishonour

And deathless infamy is fallen upon me.
Was it my fault? Am I a traitor? No.
But then, my only child, my daughter wedded:—
There my best blood runs foul, and a disease
Incurable has seiz'd upon my memory.

Enter BELVIDERA, in a long mourning Veil, L.H.U.E.

Bel. He's there, my father, my inhuman father
That for three years has left an only child
Expos'd to all the outrages of fate,
And cruel ruin!—oh—

Pri. What child of sorrow
Art thou, that com'st wrapt in weeds of sadness,
And mov'st as if thy steps were tow'rd a grave?

Bel. A wretch, who from the very top of happiness
Am fall'n into the lowest depths of misery,
And want your pitying hand to raise me up again.

Pri. What would'st thou beg for?

Bel. Pity and forgiveness. (*Throws up her veil.*)
By the kind, tender names of child and father
Hear my complaints, and take me to your love.

Pri. My daughter!

Bel. Yes, your daughter!
And you've oft told me,
With smiles of love and chaste paternal kisses,
I'd much resemblance of my mother.

Pri. Don't talk thus.

Bel. Yes, I must; and you must hear me too.
I have a husband.

Pri. Damn him.

Bel. Oh! do not curse him;
He would not speak so hard a word towards you
On any terms, howe'er he deals with me.

Pri. Ha! what means my child?

Bel. Oh! my husband, my dear husband,
Carries a dagger in his once kind bosom,
To pierce the heart of your poor Belvidera.

Pri. Kill thee!

Bel. Yes, kill me. When he pass'd his faith

And covenant against your state and senate,
 He gave me up a hostage for his truth :
 With me a dagger and a dire commission,
 Whene'er he fail'd, to plunge it through this bosom.
 I learnt the danger, chose the hour of love
 T' attempt his heart, and bring it back to honour.
 Great love prevail'd, and bless'd me with success !
 He came, confess'd, betray'd his dearest friends
 For promis'd mercy. Now they're doom'd to suffer.
 Gall'd with remembrance of what then was sworn,
 If they are lost, he vows t'appease the gods
 With this poor life, and make my blood th' atonement.

Pri. Heav'ns !

Bel. If I was ever then your care, now hear me ;
 Fly to the senate, save the promis'd lives
 Of his dear friends, ere mine be made the sacrifice.

Pri. Oh, my heart's comfort !

Bel. Will you not my father ?

Weep not, but answer me.

Pri. By heav'n I will.

Not one of them but what shall be immortal.
 Canst thou forgive me all my follies past ?
 I'll henceforth be indeed a father ; never,
 Never more thus expose, but cherish thee,
 Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life,
 Dear as these eyes that weep in fondness o'er thee.
 Peace to thy heart. Farewell.

Bel. Go and remember,

'Tis Belvidera's life her father pleads for.

[*Exeunt, Bel. L.H. Pri. R.H.*]

SCENE II.—*A Garden.*

Enter JAFFIER, R.H.

Jaf. Final destruction seize on all the world !
 Bend down ye heav'ns, and shutting round this earth,
 Crush the vile globe into its first confusion !

Enter BELVIDERA, L.H.

Bel. My life—(*Meeting him.*)

Jaf. My plague—(*Turning from her.*)

Bel. Nay, then I see my ruin.
If I must die!

Jaf. Nor let the thoughts of death perplex thy fancy;
But answer me to what I shall demand,
With a firm temper and unshaken spirit.

Bel. I will, when I've done weeping—

Jaf. Fie, no more on't—
How long is't since that miserable day
We wedded first.

Bel. Oh! Oh!

Jaf. Nay, keep in thy tears,
Lest they unman me too.

Bel. Heav'n knows I cannot;
The words you utter sound so very sadly,
The streams will follow—

Jaf. Come, I'll kiss 'em dry then.

Bel. But was't a miserable day?

Jaf. A curs'd one.

Bel. I thought it otherwise; and you've often sworn,
In the transporting hours of warmest love,
When sure you spoke the truth, you've sworn you
bless'd it.

Jaf. 'Twas a rash oath.

Bel. Then why am I not curs'd too?

Jaf. No, Belvidera; by th' eternal truth,
I dote with too much fondness.

Bel. Still so kind?
Still then do you love me?

Jaf. Mine ne'er was blest
Since the first pair met, as I have been.

Bel. Then sure you will not curse me?

Jaf. No, I'll bless thee.
I came on purpose, Belvidera, to bless thee.
'Tis now, I think, three years, we've liv'd together.

Bel. And may no fatal minute ever part us,
Till, reverend grown for age and love, we go
Down to one grave, as our last bed, together;
There sleep in peace, till an eternal morning.

Jaf. Did I not say, I came to bless thee?

Bel. You did.

Jaf. Then hear me, bounteous heav'n :
 Pour down your blessings on this beauteous head,
 Where everlasting sweets are always springing,
 With a continual giving hand :—let peace,
 Honour, and safety, always hover round her ;
 Feed her with plenty ; let her eyes ne'er see
 A sight of sorrow, nor her heart know mourning :
 Crown all her days with joy, her nights with rest,
 Harmless as her own thoughts ; and prop her virtue,
 To bear the loss of one that too much lov'd ;
 And comfort her with patience in our parting.

Bel. How ! Parting, parting !

Jaf. Yes, for ever parting ;
 I have sworn, Belvidera, by yon heav'n,
 That best can tell how much I lose to leave thee,
 We part this hour for ever. (*Crosses to L.H.*)

Bel. Oh ! call back
 Your cruel blessing ; stay with me, and curse me.

Jaf. Now hold heart, or never.

Bel. By all the tender days we've liv'd together,
 Pity my sad condition ; speak, but speak.

Jaf. Oh ! Oh !

Bel. By these arms, that now cling round thy neck,
 By these poor streaming eyes—

Jaf. Murder ! unhold me :
 Or by th' immortal destiny that doom'd me
(*Draws the dagger.*)

To this curs'd minute, I'll not live one longer ;
 Resolve to let me go, or see me fall—
 Hark, the dismal bell (*Passing bell tolls.*)
 Tolls out for death ! I must attend its call too ;
 For my poor friend, my dying Pierre, expects me :
 He sent a message to require I'd see him
 Before he died, and take his last forgiveness.
 Farewell, for ever.

Bel. Leave thy dagger with me,
 Bequeath me something—Not one kiss at parting ?
 Oh ! my poor heart, when wilt thou break ?
(*Going out, looks back at him.*)

Jaf. Yet stay :

We have a child, as yet a tender infant :
 Be a kind mother to him when I'm gone :
 Breed him in virtue, and the paths of honour,
 But never let him know his father's story ;
 I charge thee, guard him from the wrongs my fate
 May do his future fortune, or his name :
 Now—nearer yet— (*Approaching each other.*)
 Oh ! that my arms were rivetted
 Thus round thee ever ! But my friend ! my oath !
 This, and no more. (*Kisses her.*)

Bel. Another, sure another,
 For that poor little one you've ta'en such care of.
 I'll giv't him truly.

Jaf. So now farewell.

Bel. For ever ?

Jaf. Heav'n knows for ever ; all good angels guard
 thee. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Bel. All ill ones sure had charge of me this moment.
 Curs'd be my days, and doubly curs'd my nights.
 Oh ! give me daggers, fire, or water :
 How I could bleed, how burn, how drown, the waves
 Huzzing and booming round my sinking head,
 Till I descended to the peaceful bottom !
 Oh ! there's all quiet, here, all rage and fury :
 The air's too thin, and pierces my weak brain ;
 I long for thick, substantial sleep ; Hell ! hell !
 Burst from the centre, rage and roar aloud,
 If thou art half so hot, so mad as I am. [*Exit, R.H.*]

SCENE III.—*A Scaffold, and a Wheel prepared
 for the Execution of Pierre.*

*Enter OFFICER, PIERRE, Guards, Executioner, and
 a great Rabble, R.H.*

Pier. My friend not come yet ?

Enter JAFFIER, L.H.

Jaf. Oh, Pierre ! (*They embrace in centre.*)

Pier. Yet nearer.

Dear to my arms, though thou'st undone my fame,
I can't forget to love thee. Pr'ythee, Jaffier,
Forgive that filthy blow my passion dealt thee ;
I'm now preparing for the land of peace,
And fain would have the charitable wishes
Of all good men, like thee, to bless my journey.

Jaf. Good ! I am the vilest creature, worse than
e'er

Suffer'd the shameful fate thou'rt going to taste of.

Off. (R.H.) The time grows short, your friends are
dead already.

Jaf. Dead !

Pier. Yes, dead, Jaffier ; they've all died like men
too,

Worthy their character.

Jaf. And what must I do ?

Pier. Oh, Jaffier !

Jaf. Speak aloud thy burthen'd soul,
And tell thy troubles to thy tortur'd friend.

Pier. Friend ! Couldst thou yet be a friend, a gene-
rous friend,

I might hope comfort from thy noble sorrows.
Heav'n knows, I want a friend.

Jaf. And I a kind one,
That would not thus scorn my repenting virtue,
Or think, when he's to die, my thoughts are idle.

Pier. No ! live, I charge thee, Jaffier.

Jaf. Yes, I will live :
But it shall be to see thy fall reveng'd
At such a rate, as Venice long shall groan for.

Pier. Wilt thou ?

Jaf. I will, by heav'n.

Pier. Then still thou'rt noble,
And I forgive thee. Oh—yet—shall I trust thee ?

Jaf. No ; I've been false already.

Pier. Dost thou love me ?

Jaf. Rip up my heart, and satisfy thy doubtings.

Pier. Curse on this weakness. (*Weeps.*)

Jaf. Tears ! Amazement ! Tears !

I never saw thee melted thus before ;
 And know there's something lab'ring in thy bosom,
 That must have vent : Though I'm a villain, tell me.

Pier. See'st thou that engine ?

(Pointing to the wheel.)

Jaf. Why ?

Pier. Is't fit a soldier, who has liv'd with honour,
 Fought nation's quarrels, and been crown'd with conquest,

Be expos'd a common carcase on a wheel ?

Jaf. Hah !

Pier. Speak ! is't fitting ?

Jaf. Fitting ?

Pier. Yes ; is't fitting ?

Jaf. What's to be done ?

Pier. I'd have thee undertake

Something that's noble, to preserve my memory
 From the disgrace that's ready to attain it.

Off. The day grows late, sir.

Pier. I'll make haste. Oh, Jaffier !

Though thou'st betray'd me, do me some way justice.

Jaf. No more of that : thy wishes shall be satisfied ;
 I have a wife, and she shall bleed : my child too,
 Yield up his little throat, and all

T' appease thee *(Going away, Pierre-holds him.)*

Pier. No—this—no more. *(Whispers Jaf.)*

Jaf. Hah ! is't then so ?

Pier. Most certainly.

Jaf. I'll do it.

Pier. Remember.

Off. Sir.

Pier. Come, now I'm ready.

(He and Jaf. ascend the scaffold, R.H.)

Captain, you should be a gentleman of honour ;

Keep off the rabble, that I may have room

To entertain my fate, and die with decency.

Come. *(Takes off his gown, executioner prepares to bind him.)*

You'll think on't. *(To Jaf.)*

Jaf. 'Twon't grow stale before to-morrow.

Pier. Now, Jaffier! now I'm going. Now—
(*Executioner having bound him.*)

Jaf. Have at thee,
Thou honest heart, then—here— (*Stabs him.*)
And this is well too. (*Stabs himself.*)

Pier. Now thou hast indeed been faithful.
This was done nobly—We have deceiv'd the senate.

Jaf. Bravely.

Pier. Ha, ha, ha—oh! oh! (*Dies.*)

Jaf. Now, ye curs'd rulers,
Thus of the blood y'ave shed, I make libation,
And sprinkle it mingling. May it rest upon you,
And all your race. Be henceforth peace a stranger
Within your walls; let plagues and famine waste
Your generation—Oh, poor Belvidera!
Sir, I have a wife, bear this in safety to her,
A token that with my dying breath I bless'd her,
And the dear little infant left behind me.
I'm sick—I'm quiet. (*Dies.—Scene shuts upon them.*)

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment at PRIULI'S.*

*Soft Music. Enter BELVIDERA, distracted, led by
two of her Women; PRIULI and Servants, R.H.*

Pri. (L.H.) Strengthen her heart with patience,
pitying heav'n!

Bel. (In centre.) Come, come, come, come, come,
nay, come to bed,

Pr'ythee, my love. The winds! hark how they whistle;
And the rain beats: Oh! how the weather shrinks me!
You are angry now, who cares? Pish! no indeed,
Choose then; I say you shall not go, you shall not;
Whip your ill nature; get you gone then. Oh!
Are you return'd? See, father, here he's come again:
Am I to blame to love him? Oh, thou dear one!
Why do you fly me? Are you angry still then?
Jaffier, where art thou? Father, why do you do thus?
Stand off, don't hide him from me. He's here some-
where.

Stand off, I say : What gone ? Remember't, tyrant :
I may revenge myself for this trick, one day.
I'll do't—I'll do't.

Enter OFFICER, L.H.

Pri. News; what news ? (*Off. whispers Priuli.*)

Off. Most sad, sir ;

Jaffier, upon the scaffold, to prevent
A shameful death, stabb'd Pierre, and next himself ;
Both fell together.

Pri. Daughter !

Bel. Ha ! look there !

My husband bloody, and his friend too ! Murder !
Who has done this ? Speak to me, thou sad vision :
On these poor trembling knees I beg it. Vanish'd—
Here they went down—Oh, I'll dig, dig, the den up !

You sha'n't, delude me thus. Ho, Jaffier, Jaffier,
Peep up, and give me but a look. I have him !
I've got him, father : Oh !

My love ; my dear ! my blessing ! help me ! help me !
They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom.

Nay—now they pull so hard—farewell. (*Dies.*)

(*The Curtain falls to slow Music.*)

Disposition of the Characters when the Curtain falls.



EPILOGUE.

The text is done, and now for application,
And when that's ended, pass your approbation.
Though the conspiracy's prevented here,
Methinks I see another hatching there ;
And there's a certain faction fain would sway,
If they had strength enough, and damn this play :
But this the Author bade me boldly say ;
If any take this plainness in ill part,
He's glad on't from the bottom of his heart :
Poets in honour of the truth should write,
With the same spirt brave men for it fight.
And though against him causeless hatreds rise,
And daily where he goes of late, he spies
The seowls of sullen and revengeful eyes ;
'Tis what he knows, with much contempt to bear,
And serves a cause too good to let him fear :
He fears no poison from an incens'd drab,
No ruffian's five-foot sword, nor rascal's stab ;
Nor any other snares of mischief laid,
Not a Rose-alley cudgel-ambuscade,
From any private cause where malice reigns,
Or general pique all blockheads have to brains :
Nothing shall daunt his pen when truth does call ;
No, not the picture-mangler* at Guild-hall.
The rebel tribe, of which that vermin's one,
Have now set forward, and their course begun ;

* The rascal that cut the duke of York's picture.

EPILOGUE.

And while that prince's figure they deface,
As they before had massacred his name,
Durst their base fears but look him in the face,
They'd use his person as they've us'd his fame :
A face in which such lineaments they read
Of that great martyr's, whose rich blood they shed,
That their rebellious hate they still retain,
And in his son would murder him again.
With indignation then let each brave heart
Rouze, and unite, to take his injur'd part ;
Till royal love and goodness call him home,
And songs of triumph meet him as he come ;
'Till heav'n his honour, and our peace restore ;
And villains never wrong his virtue more.

W. OXBERRY AND CO. PRINTERS,
8, WHITE-HART-YARD.

Orberry's Edition.

THE WONDER,

A COMEDY;

BY

Mrs. Susanna Centlivre.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY MARKED WITH
THE STAGE BUSINESS AND STAGE DIRECTIONS,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatres Royal.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS, BY W. SIMPKIN AND
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1818.

W. OXBERRY AND CO. PRINTERS,
8, WHITE HART YARD.

Remarks.

Nothing so strongly proves the richness and variety of the English comedy as the utter impossibility of dividing it into classes; it seems like the grass of the fields, to defy any regular classification; do what you will, exceptions and anomalies will occur to break down the unity of the system, and after all, the varieties, will be as numerous as the rules. When therefore we divide comedy into four sorts, or kinds, we have no doubt, but that many, very many dramas may be brought, too stubborn to enter into any of our arrangements; but even this imperfect division will be found useful as we proceed.

The first class is that of Shakspeare's school, in which poetry was united with humour, and character was portrayed with uncommon vigour; it exhibited the ridiculous of *nature*, not of *habit*, and is as well understood now as in the day when it first was written.

The second is that of Ben Jonson's school, the exact reverse of the former; it painted habits, and is now, with very few exceptions utterly unintelligible. This school, considerably exaggerated, and with increasing bustle of plot is the farcical comedy of many modern writers.

The third is that of Congreve's time, which may not improperly be called the epigrammatic, for the whole purpose of every character, whether wise or foolish, high or low, is to say smart things; every speech is an epigram, keen, and polished to a remarkable degree; it is one constant scene of glitter from the beginning to the end, but as the attention is not always to be kept awake by the play of words, weariness at last succeeds to admiration; this is

also the school of Sheridan, but though he has not so much brilliancy of wit, or so much originality as Congreve, he has more taste, propriety, and character, and has produced one comedy, which in its kind is unexceptionable.

The last species is the sentimental, which is all tears, lamentations, and virtue; with Cumberland it is innocent, for it only draws fictitious portraits of more virtue than this virtuous world affords; with Kotzebue, it is disgusting, for it decks out vice in the robes of innocence, and is always calling on our pity, where pity ought most to be withheld. He is the very knight-errant and champion of iniquity and prostitution; his great delight is to whine and moralize over what he is pleased to consider as fallen innocence, and all this in language below contempt; throughout the whole of his dramatic works, which, as near as we can recollect, form twenty-five volumes 12mo., not including his almanac of farces, there is not one line worthy to be remembered.

The "Wonder," we are inclined to rank in the second class; if it have any humour, it is that of *habit* not of *nature*; but we are not much disposed to allow even this, and rather attribute its effect to farcical incidents, than to any power in the language or the characters. It is in fact, a novel dramatized, full of improbability, but there is so much unceasing bustle in the plot, the incidents follow each other so rapidly, and the situations are so laughable, that it always pleases. Its motion is so quick, that the spectator has no time to discover its defects, and we have not the least hesitation in saying, that a comedy might have more humour and more character, without giving half so much satisfaction to the general mind.

The language of this piece is neither very brilliant nor very elegant, but, it flows "trippingly on the tongue," and never offends by any gross improprieties; it is moreover arch, lively, and seldom, loaded with superfluities. The dialect of *Gibby* is a strange medley; it is neither Scotch nor English, but it always passes muster well enough upon the stage, for it sounds strange to an English ear, and as the audience know it is not their own language, they are always good natured enough to believe it Scotch; besides it has the merit of being perfectly intelligible,

which certainly would not be the case with the genuine Scotch dialect.

The jealousy of *Don Felix* is not very powerfully drawn, and is, we believe of Italian origin; in reading, it instructs very little, but as the situation is striking, it becomes very laughable on the stage, when in the hands of a good actor; there is much more comedy in the parts of *Flora* and *Lissardo*, yet, even they are not the creatures of any extraordinary talent.

Upon the whole, Mrs. Centlivre wrote but for the day, and time which has crumbled into dust more solid and better erected monuments, must inevitably destroy her slight and perishable fabrics.

Mrs. Susanna Centlivre, the authoress of this comedy was the daughter of Mr. Freeman, of Holbeach, in Lincolnshire. At the time of the restoration, her father was compelled to fly to Ireland, and there, about the year 1680, she was born. She was married at sixteen to the son of Sir Stephen Fox; but that gentleman did not live with her above twelve-months. Her second husband, was a Mr. Carrol, who had the misfortune to be killed in a duel, within about a year and a half after their marriage. She then became a votary of the muses, and under the name of Carrol, she published some of her earlier pieces. Her first was the tragedy of "*The Perjured Wife*."—In 1706, performing the part of *Alexander the Great*, at Windsor, Mr. Joseph Centlivre, principal cook to her Majesty, became enamoured of her; and they were soon after married, and lived very happily together. She died at his house in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, on the first of December, 1723, and was buried in the parish church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

Mrs. Centlivre's productions are as follow:—

The Perjured Husband, T.—*Love's Contrivance*, C.—*Beau's Duel*, C.—*Stolen Heiress*, C.—*Gamester*, C.—*Basset Table*, C.—*Love at a Venture*, C.—*Platonic Lady*, C.—*Busy Body*, C.—*Man's Bewitch'd*, C.—*A Bickerstaff's Burying*, F.—*Marplot*, C.—*Perplex'd Lovers*, C.—*Wonder*, C.—*Gotham Election*, F.—*Wife Well Managed*, F.—*Cruel Gift*, T.—*Bold Stroke for a Wife*, C.—*Artifice*, C.

THE PROLOGUE.

OUR author fears the critics of the stage,
Who, like barbarians, spare nor sex, nor age ;
She trembles at those censors in the pit,
Who think good-nature shews a want of wit :
Such malice, oh ! what muse can undergo it ?
To save themselves, they always damn the poet.
Our author flies from such a partial jury,
As wary lovers from the nymphs of Drury ;
To the few candid judges, for a smile,
She humbly sues, to recompense her toil.
To the bright circle of the fair, she next
Commits her cause, with anxious doubts perplex'd.
Where can she with such hopes of favour kneel,
As to those judges who her frailties feel ?
A few mistakes her sex may well excuse,
And such a plea no woman should refuse :
If she succeeds, a woman gains applause ;
What female but must favour such a cause ?
Her faults, whate'er they are, e'en pass them by,
And only on her beauties fix your eye.
In plays, like vessels floating on the sea,
There's none so wise to know their destiny.
In this, howe'er, the pilot's skill appears,
While by the stars his constant course he steers ;
Rightly our author does her judgment show,
That for her safety she relies on you.
Your approbation, fair ones, can't but move
Those stubborn hearts, which first you taught to love :
The men must all applaud this play of ours ;
For who dare see with other eyes than yours ?

Costume.

DON LOPEZ.

Green doublet, buff vest, green pantaloons, and russet boots.

DON FELIX.

Green velvet Spanish coat, white vest, white silk pantaloons, and white shoes, hat and feathers.

FREDERIC.

Crimson Spanish coat, white vest, and pantaloons, russet boots, hat and feathers.

COLONEL BRITON.

Blue regimental coat, white waistcoat, and pantaloons, military boots.

DON PEDRO.

Plumb coloured cloak, vest, breeches, and russet boots.

LISSARDO.

Brown and grey Spanish dress.

GIBBY.

A Highland dress.

VIOLANTE.

White satin dress, spangled points, and hanging sleeves.

ISABELLA.

White leno dress, coloured satin body, hanging sleeves, and points, trimmed with silver, and black veil.

FLORA.

Black velvet body, and hanging sleeves, blue sarsnet petticoat, trimmed with black points, black gauze apron, trimmed with blue.

INIS.

White petticoat, point calico body, and apron,

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

	<i>Drury-lane.</i>	<i>Covent-garden.</i>
<i>Don Lopez</i>	Mr. Hughes.	Mr. Blanchard.
<i>Don Felix</i>	Mr. Elliston.	Mr. C. Kemble.
<i>Frederic</i>	Mr. Barnard.	Mr. Clermont.
<i>Colonel Briton</i>	Mr. Holland.	Mr. Abbot.
<i>Don Pedro</i>	Mr. Gattie.	Mr. Simmons.
<i>Gibby</i>	Mr. Palmer.	Mr. Emery.
<i>Lissardo</i>	Mr. Harley.	Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Alguazil</i>	Mr. Maddocks.	Mr. Atkins.
<i>Vasquez</i>	Mr. Evans.	Mr. Menage.
<i>Soldier</i>	Mr. Cooke.	
<i>Servant</i>	Mr. Minton.	
<i>3 Alguazil Attendants</i> ..		
<i>3 Servants</i>		
<i>Donna Violante</i>	Mrs. Glover.	Miss Brunton.
<i>Donna Isabella</i>	Mrs. Orger.	Miss Foote.
<i>Inis</i>	Mrs. Scott.	Miss Logan.
<i>Flora</i>	Miss Kelly.	Mrs. Gibbs.

The time this piece takes in representation is about two hours and forty-two minutes. The first act occupies the space of fifty-seven minutes—the second, sixty—the third, forty-five.—The half-price commences, generally, at a quarter after nine o'clock.

Stage Directions.

By R. H.....	is meant.....	Right Hand.
L. H.....		Left Hand.
S. E.....		Second Entrance.
U. E.....		Upper Entrance.
M. D.....		Middle Door.
D. F.....		Door in Flat.
R. H. D.....		Right Hand Door.
L. H. D.....		Left Hand Door.

THE WONDER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter DON LOPEZ, L.H. meeting, FREDERIC, R.H.

Fred. My lord, don Lopez.

Lop. How d'ye, Frederic?

Fred. At your lordship's service. I am glad to see you look so well, my lord; I hope Antonio's out of danger?

Lop. Quite the contrary; his fever increases, they tell me; and the surgeons are of opinion his wound is mortal.

Fred. Your son, don Felix, is safe, I hope?

Lop. I hope so too; but they offer large rewards to apprehend him.

Fred. When heard your Lordship from him?

Lop. Not since he went. I forbid him writing till the public news gave him an account of Antonio's health. Letters might be intercepted, and the place of his abode discovered; however, if Antonio dies, Felix shall for England. You have been there; what sort of people are the English?

Fred. My lord, the English are, by nature, what the ancient Romans were by discipline—courageous, bold, hardy, and in love with liberty. Liberty is the idol of the English, under whose banner all the nation enlists;

give but the word for liberty, and straight more armed legions would appear, than France and Philip keep in constant pay.

Lop. I like their principles. Who does not wish for freedom in all degrees of life? though common prudence sometimes makes us act against it, as I am now obliged to do; for I intend to marry my daughter to don Guzman, whom I expect from Holland every day, whither he went to take possession of a large estate left him by his uncle.

Fred. You will not, surely, sacrifice the lovely Isabella to age, avarice, and a fool? pardon the expression, my lord, but my concern for your beauteous daughter transports me beyond that good manners which I ought to pay to your lordship's presence.

Lop. I can't deny the justness of the character, Frederic; but you are not insensible what I have suffered by these wars; and he has two things which render him very agreeable to me for a son-in-law—he is rich, and well-born; as for his being a fool, I don't conceive how that can be any blot in a husband who is already possessed of a good estate.—A poor fool, indeed, is a very scandalous thing; and so are your poor wits, in my opinion, who have nothing to be vain of but the inside of their skulls. Now, for don Guzman, I know I can rule him as I think fit; this is acting the politic part, Frederic, without which it is impossible to keep up the port of this life.

Fred. But have you no consideration for your daughter's welfare, my lord?

Lop. Is a husband of twenty thousand crowns a year no consideration? Now I think it a very good consideration.

Fred. One way, my lord. But what will the world say of such a match?

Lop. Sir, I value not the world a button.

Fred. I cannot think your daughter can have any inclination for such a husband.

Lop. There I believe you are pretty much in the right; though it is a secret which I never had the

curiosity to inquire into, nor, I believe, ever shall.—Inclination, quotha! Parents would have a fine time on't, if they consulted their childrens' inclinations! No, no, sir, it is not a father's business to follow his childrens' inclinations till he makes himself a beggar.

Fred. But this is of another nature, my lord.

Lop. Lookye, sir, I resolve she shall marry don Guzman, the moment he arrives; (*Crosses to R.H.*) though I could not govern my son, I will my daughter, I assure you.

Fred. This match, my lord, is more preposterous than that which you proposed to your son, from whence arose this fatal quarrel.—Don Antonio's sister, Elvira, wanted beauty only; but Guzman everything but—

Lop. Money, and that will purchase everything; and so adieu. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Fred. Monstrous! These are the resolutions which destroy the comforts of matrimony—he is rich and well-born, powerful arguments indeed! Could I but add them to the friendship of don Felix, what might I not hope? But a merchant and a grandee of Portugal, are inconsistent names—

Enter LISSARDO, L.H in a riding-habit.

Lissardo! From whence came you?

Lis. That letter will inform you, sir.

Fred. I hope your master's safe?

Lis. I left him so; I have another to deliver which requires haste. Your most humble servant, sir.

(*Bowing. Crosses to R.H.*)

Fred. To Violante, I suppose?

Lis. The same.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Fred. (*Reads.*) *Dear Frederick—the two chief blessings of this life are, a friend and a mistress; to be debarred the sight of those is not to live. I hear nothing of Antonio's death, and therefore resolve to venture to thy house this evening, impatient to see Violante, and embrace my friend.* Your's,

FELIX.

Pray heaven, he comes undiscovered.—Ha! colonel Briton.

Enter COLONEL BRITON, in a riding-habit, R.H.

Col. B. Frederic, I rejoice to see thee.

Fred. What brought you to Lisbon, colonel?

Col. B. La fortune de la guerre, as the French say: I have commanded these three last years in Spain, but my country has thought fit to strike up a peace, and give us good Protestants leave to hope for Christian burial; so I resolved to take Lisbon in my way home.

Fred. If you are not provided of a lodging, colonel, pray command my house while you stay.

Col. B. If I were sure I should not be troublesome, I would accept your offer, Frederic.

Fred. So far from trouble, colonel, I shall take it as a particular favour. What have we here?

Col. B. My footman. This is our country dress, you must know; which, for the honour of Scotland, I make all my servants wear.

Enter GIBBY, in a Highland-dress, R.H.

Gibby. What mun I de with the horses, and like yer honour? They will tak cold gin they stand in the causeway.

Fred. Oh, I'll take care of them. What, ho! Vasquez!

Enter VASQUES, R.H.

Put those horses, which that honest fellow will show you, into my stable, do you hear, and feed them well.

Vas. Yes, sir.—Sir, by my master's orders, I am, sir, your most obsequious, humble servant. Be pleased to lead the way.

Gibby. 'Sbleed, gang yer gate, sir, and I sall follow ye: Ise tee hungry to feed on compliments.

[*Exit with Vasquez, R.H.*

Fred. Ha, ha! a comical fellow.—Well, how do you like our country, colonel?

Col. B. Why, faith, Frederic, a man might pass his time agreeably enough withinside of a nunnery! but to behold such troops of soft, plump, tender, melting, wishing, nay, willing girls, too, through a damn'd grate, gives us Britons strong temptations to plunder. Ah, Frederic, your priests are wicked rogues; they immure beauty for their own proper use, and show it only to the laity to create desires, and inflame accomp'ts, that they may purchase pardons at a dearer rate.

Fred. I own wenching is something more difficult here than in England, where women's liberties are subservient to their inclinations, and husbands seem of no effect, but to take care of the children which their wives provide.

Col. B. And does restraint get the better of inclination with your women here? No, I'll be sworn not, even in fourscore. Don't I know the constitution of the Spanish ladies?

Fred. And of all the ladies where you come, colonel; you were ever a man of gallantry.

Col. B. Ah, Frederic, the kirk half starves us Scotchmen. We are kept so sharp at home, that we feed like cannibals abroad. Harkye, hast thou never a pretty acquaintance now, that thou wouldst consign over to a friend for half an hour, ha?

Fred. Faith, colonel, I am the worst pimp in Christendom; you had better trust to your own luck; the women will soon find you out, I warrant you.

Col. B. Ay, but it is dangerous foraging in an enemy's country; and since I have some hopes of seeing my own again, I had rather purchase my pleasure, than run the hazard of a stiletto in my guts. Wilt thou recommend me to a wife, then; one that is willing to exchange her moidores for English liberty; ha, friend?

Fred. She must be very handsome, I suppose?

Col. B. The handsomer the better—but be sure she has a nose.

Fred. Ay, ay, and some gold.

Col. B. Oh, very much gold ; I shall never be able to swallow the matrimonial pill, if it be not well gilded.

Fred. Pho, beauty will make it slide down nimbly.

Col. B. At first, perhaps, it may ; but the second or third dose will choke me.—I confess, Frederic, women are the prettiest playthings in nature ; but gold, substantial gold, gives 'em the air, the mien, the shape, the grace, and beauty of a goddess.

Fred. And has not gold the same divinity in their eyes, colonel ?

Col. B. Too often—

None marry now for love ; no, that's a jest :
The self-same bargain serves for wife and beast.

Fred. You are always gay, colonel. Come, shall we take a refreshing glass at my house, and consider what has been said ?

Col. B. I have two or three compliments to discharge for some friends, and then I shall wait on you with pleasure. Where do you live ?

Fred. At yon corner house with the green rails.

Col. B. In the close of the evening I will endeavour to kiss your hand. Adieu.

Fred. I shall expect you with impatience.

[*Exeunt Colonel, L.H. and Frederic, R.H.*]

SCENE II.—*A Room in DON LOPEZ's House.*

Enter ISABELLA and INIS, her Maid.

Inis. For goodness' sake, madam, where are you going in this pet ?

Isa. Anywhere, to avoid matrimony ; the thought of a husband is terrible to me.

Inis. Ay, of an old husband ; but if you may choose for yourself, I fancy matrimony would be no such frightful thing to you.

Isa. You are pretty much in the right, Inis ; but to be forced into the arms of an idiot, who has neither person to please the eye, sense to charm the ear, nor generosity to supply those defects. Ah, Inis, what

pleasant lives women lead in England, where duty wears no fetter but inclination. The custom of our country enslaves us from our very cradles—first to our parents, next to our husbands; and when heaven is so kind to rid us of both these, our brothers still usurp authority, and expect a blind obedience from us: so that, maids, wives, or widows, we are little better than slaves to the tyrant man; therefore, to avoid their power, I resolve to cast myself into a monastery.

Inis. That is, you'll cut your own throat, to avoid another's doing it for you. Ah, madam, those eyes tell me you have no nun's flesh about you! A monastery, quotha! where you'll wish yourself into the green-sickness in a month.

Isa. What care I; there will be no man to plague me.

Inis. No, nor, what's much worse, to please you neither.—Odslife, madam, you are the first woman that ever despaired in a Christian country! Were I in your place——

Isa. Why, what would your wisdom do if you were?

Inis. I'd embark with the first fair wind with all my jewels, and seek my fortune on t'other side the water; no shore can treat you worse than your own; there's never a father in Christendom should make me marry any man against my will.

Isa. I am too great a coward to follow your advice: I must contrive some way to avoid don Guzman, and yet stay in my own country.

Enter DON LOPEZ, L.H.

Lop. Must you so, mistress; but I shall take care to prevent you. (*Aside.*) Isabella, whither are you going, my child?

Isa. To church, sir.

Inis. The old rogue has certainly overheard her.—
(*Aside.*)

Lop. Your devotion must needs be very strong, or

your memory very weak, my dear; why, vespers are over for this night. Come, come, you shall have a better errand to church, than to say your prayers there. Don Guzman is arrived in the river, and I expect him ashore to-morrow.

Isa. Ha! to-morrow!

Lop. He writes me word, that his estate in Holland is worth twelve thousand crowns a year; which, together with what he had before, will make thee the happiest wife in Lisbon.

Isa. And the most unhappy woman in the world.—Oh, sir, if I have any power in your heart, if the tenderness of a father be not quite extinct, hear me with patience.

Lop. No objection against the marriage, and I will hear whatsoever thou hast to say.

Isa. That's torturing me on the rack, and forbidding me to groan; upon my knees I claim the privilege of flesh and blood. (*Kneels.*)

Lop. I grant it—thou shalt have an arm full of flesh and blood to-morrow. Flesh and blood, quotha! heaven forbid I should deny thee flesh and blood, my girl.

Inis. Here's an old dog for you! (*Aside.*)

Isa. Do not mistake, sir; the fatal stroke which separates soul and body, is not more terrible to the thoughts of sinners, than the name of Guzman to my ear.

Lop. Puh, puh; you lie, you lie!

Isa. My frightened heart beats hard against my breast, as if it sought a passage to your feet, to beg you'd change your purpose.

Lop. A very pretty speech this; if it were turned into blank verse, it would serve for a tragedy. Why, thou hast more wit than I thought thou hadst, child. I fancy this was all extempore; I don't believe thou didst ever think one word on't before.

Inis. Yes, but she has, my lord; for I have heard her say the same things a thousand times.

Lop. How, how? What, do you top your second-

hand jests upon your father, hussy, who knows better what's good for you than you do yourself? Remember, 'tis your duty to obey.

Isa. (Rises.) I never disobey'd before, and wish I had not reason now; but nature has got the better of my duty, and makes me loathe the harsh commands you lay.

Lop. Ha, ha! very fine! Ha, ha!

Isa. Death itself would be welcome!

Lop. Are you sure of that?

Isa. I am your daughter, my lord, and can boast as strong a resolution as yourself; I'll die before I'll marry Guzman!

Lop. Say you so? I'll try that presently. *(Draws.)* Here, let me see with what dexterity you can breathe a vein now. *(Offers her his sword.)* The point is pretty sharp; 'twill do your business, I warrant you.

Inis. Bless me, sir, what do you mean to put a sword into the hands of a desperate woman?

Lop. Desperate! ha, ha, ha! you see how desperate she is. What, art thou frightened, little Bell? ha!

Isa. I confess I am startled at your morals, sir.

Lop. Ay, ay, child, thou hadst better take the man, —he'll hurt thee the least of the two.

Isa. I shall take neither, sir; death has many doors, and when I can live no longer with pleasure, I shall find one to let him in at without your aid.

Lop. Say'st thou so, my dear Bell? Ods, I'm afraid thou art a little lunatic, Bell. I must take care of thee, child. *(Takes hold of her, and pulls a key out of his pocket.)* I shall make bold to secure thee, my dear. I'll see if locks and bars can keep thee till Guzman comes. Go, get into your chamber.

(Pushes her in, and locks L.H.D.)

There I'll your boasted resolution try—

And see who'll get the better, you or I.

[*Exeunt, R.H.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in DON PEDRO's House.*

Enter VIOLANTE, reading a letter, and FLORA following, R.H.

Flora. What, must that letter be read again ?

Vio. Yes, and again, and again, and again, a thousand times again ; a letter from a faithful lover can never be read too often : it speaks such kind, such soft, such tender things——(*Kisses it.*)

Flora. But always the same language.

Vio. It does not charm the less for that.

Flora. In my opinion, nothing charms that does not change ; and any composition of the four-and-twenty letters, after the first essay, from the same hand, must be dull, except a bank note, or a bill of exchange.

Vio. Thy taste is my aversion. (*Reads.*) *My all that's charming, since life's not life, exiled from thee, this night shall bring me to thy arms. Frederic and thee are all I trust. These six weeks' absence have been, in love's account, six hundred years. When it is dark, expect the wonted signal at thy window ; till when, adieu. Thine, more than his own.* FELIX.

Flora. Who would not have said as much to a lady of her beauty, and twenty thousand pounds ? (*Aside.*) —Were I a man, methinks, I could have said a hundred finer things.

Vio. What would you have said ?

Flora. I would have compared your eyes to the stars, your teeth to ivory, your lips to coral, your neck to alabaster, your shape to——

Vio. No more of your bombast ; truth is the best eloquence in a lover. What proof remains ungiven of his love ? When his father threatened to disinherit him, for refusing Don Antonio's sister, from whence sprung

this unhappy quarrel, did it shake his love for me?—And now, though strict inquiry runs through every place, with large rewards to apprehend him, does he not venture all for me?

Flora. But you know, madam, your father, don Pedro, designs you for a nun—to be sure, you look very like a nun—and says, your grandfather left you your fortune upon that condition.

Vio. Not without my approbation, girl, when I come to one-and-twenty, as I am informed. But, however, I shall run the risk of that. Go, call in Lissardo.

Flora. Yes, madam. Now for a thousand verbal questions. [*Aside, and Exit, L.H.D.*]

Re-enter FLORA, with LISSARDO, L.H.D.

Vio. Well, and how do you do, Lissardo?

Lis. Ah, very weary, madam—Faith, thou look'st wondrous pretty, Flora. (*Apart to Flora.*)

Vio. How came you?

Lis. En chevalier, madam, upon a hackney jade, which, they told me, formerly belonged to an English colonel. But I should have rather thought she had been bred a good Roman Catholic all her life-time; for she down'd on her knees to every stock and stone we came along by.—My chops water for a kiss, they do, Flora. (*Apart to Flora.*)

Flora. You'd make one believe you are wondrous fond now. (*Apart to Lissardo.*)

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Lis. Odd, if I had you alone, housewife, I'd show you how fond I could be! (*Apart to Flora.*)

Vio. Where did you leave your master?

Lis. At a little farm-house, madam, about five miles off. He'll be at don Frederic's in the evening—Odd, I will so revenge myself of those lips of thine. (*Apart to Flora.*)

Vio. Is he in health?

Flora. O, you counterfeit wondrous well. (*Apart to Lissardo.*)

Lis. No, every body knows I counterfeit very ill. (*Apart to Flora.*)

Vio. How say you? Is Felix ill? What's his distemper? Ha!

Lis. A pies on't, I hate to be interrupted. (*Aside.*) Love, madam, love. In short, madam, I believe he has thought of nothing but your ladyship ever since he left Lisbon. I am sure he could not, if I may judge of his heart by my own. (*Looks lovingly upon Flora.*)

Vio. How came you so well-acquainted with your master's thoughts, Lissardo?

Lis. By an infallible rule, madam, words are the pictures of the mind, you know; now, to prove he thinks of nothing but you, he talks of nothing but you—for example, madam: coming from shooting t'other day, with a brace of partridges, "Lissardo," said he, "go bid the cook roast me these Violantes"—I flew into the kitchen, full of thoughts of thee, and cried, "Here, cook, roast me these Florellas." (*To Flora.*)

Flora. Ha, ha! excellent—You mimic your master, then, it seems. (*To Lissardo.*)

Lis. I can do every thing as well as my master, you little rogue—(*To Flora.*) Another time, madam, the priest came to make him a visit, he called out hastily, "Lissardo," said he, "bring a Violante for my father to sit down on." Then he often mistook my name, madam, and called me Violante; in short, I heard it so often, that it became as familiar to me as my prayers.

Vio. You live very merrily, then, it seems.

Lis. Oh, exceeding merry, madam. (*Kisses Flora's hand.*)

Vio. Ha! exceeding merry? Had you treats and balls?

Lis. Oh, yes, yes, madam, several.

Flora. You are mad, Lissardo; you don't mind what my lady says to you. (*Apart to Lissardo.*)

Vio. Ha! balls? Is he so merry in my absence?—
(*Aside.*) And did your master dance, Lissardo?

Lis. Dance, madam! where, madam?

Vio. Why, at those balls you speak of.

Lis. Balls! what balls, madam?

Vio. Why, sure you are in love, Lissardo; did not you say, but now, you had balls where you have been?

Lis. Balls, madam! what balls, ma'am? Odslife, I ask your pardon, madam! I—I—I had mislaid some wash-balls of my master's, t'other day; and because I could not think where I had laid them, just when he asked for them, he very fairly broke my head, madam; and now it seems I can think of nothing else. Alas! he dance, madam! No, no, poor gentleman, he is as melancholy as an unbraced drum.

Vio. Poor Felix! There, wear that ring for your master's sake; and let him know I shall be ready to receive him. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Lis. I shall, madam. (*Puts on the ring.*) Methinks a diamond ring is a vast addition to the little finger of a gentleman. (*Admires his hand.*)

Flora. That ring must be mine.—(*Aside.*) Well, Lissardo—what haste you make to pay off arrears now. Look how the fellow stands!

Lis. 'Egad, methinks I have a very pretty hand—and very white—and the shape!—Faith, I never minded it so much before! In my opinion, it is a very fine-shaped hand—and becomes a diamond ring as well as the first grandee's in Portugal.

Flora. The man's transported! Is this your love? This your impatience?

Lis. (*Takes snuff.*) Now, in my mind, I take snuff with a very jantee air—Well, I am persuaded I want (*Crosses to L.H.*) nothing but a coach and a title to make me a very fine gentleman. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Flora. Sweet Mr. Lissardo—(*Curtseys*)—if I may presume to speak to you, without affronting your little finger——

Lis. Odso, madam, I ask your pardon—Is it to me or to the ring, you direct your discourse, madam?

Flora. Madam, good luck ! How much a diamond ring improves one !

Lis. Why, though I say it—I can carry myself as well as any body—But what wert thou going to say, child ?

Flora. Why, I was going to say—that I fancy you had best let me keep that ring ; it will be a very pretty wedding ring, Lissardo ; would it not ?

Lis. Humph !—ah !—but—but—but—I believe I sha'n't marry yet awhile.

Flora. You sha'n't, you say ?—Very well ! I suppose you design that ring for Inis ?

Lis. No, no ; I never bribe an old acquaintance—Perhaps I might let it sparkle in the eyes of a stranger a little, till we come to a right understanding—but, then, like all other mortal things, it would return from whence it came.

Flora. Insolent ! Is that your manner of dealing ?

Lis. With all but thee—Kiss me, you little rogue you. (*Hugs her.*)

Flora. Little rogue ! Pr'ythee, fellow, don't be so familiar ; (*Pushes him away*) if I mayn't keep your ring, I can keep my kisses.

Lis. You can, you say ? Spoke with the air of a chambermaid.

Flora. Replied with the spirit of a serving-man.

Lis. Pr'ythee, Flora, don't let you and I fall out ; I am in a merry humour, and shall certainly fall in somewhere.

Flora. What care I where you fall in.

Re-enter VIOLANTE, R.H.

Vio. Why do you keep Lissardo so long, Flora, when you don't know how soon my father may awake ? His afternoon naps are never long.

Flora. Had don Felix been with her, she would not have thought the time long. These ladies consider nobody's wants but their own. (*Aside.*)

Vio. Go, go, let him out.

Flora. Yes, madam.

Lis. I fly, madam. [*Exeunt Lissardo and Flora.*]

Vio. The day draws in, and night, the lover's friend, advances—Night, more welcome than the sun to me, because it brings my love.

Flora. (*Within.*) Ah, thieves, thieves! murder, murder!

Vio. (*Shrieks.*) Ah, defend me, heaven! what do I hear? Felix is certainly pursued, and will be taken.

Re-enter FLORA, running, L.H.

How now! Why dost stare so? Answer me quickly; what's the matter?

Flora. Oh, madam! as I was letting out Lissardo, a gentleman rushed between him and I, struck down my candle, and is bringing a dead person in his arms into our house.

Vio. Ha! a dead person! heaven grant it does not prove my Felix.

Flora. Here they are, madam.

Vio. I'll retire, till you discover the meaning of this accident. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Enter COLONEL BRITON, L.H. with ISABELLA in his arms, whom he sets down in a chair, and addresses himself to FLORA.

Col. B. Madam, the necessity this lady was under of being conveyed into some house with speed and secrecy, will, I hope, excuse any indecency I might be guilty of, in pressing so rudely into thi— I am an entire stranger to her name and circumstances: would I were so to her beauty, too. (*Aside.*) I commit her, madam, to your care, and fly to make her retreat secure: if the street be clear, permit me to return, and learn from her own mouth if I can be further serviceable. Pray, madam, what is the lady of this house called?

Flora. Violante, seignior.

Col. B. Are you she, madam?

Flora. Only her woman, seignior.

Col. B. Your humble servant, mistress. Pray be careful of the lady.

(Gives her two moidores and Exit, L.H.)

Flora. Two moidores! Well, he is a generous fellow. This is the only way to make one careful.

Re-enter VIOLANTE, R.H.

Fio. Was you distracted, Flora, to tell my name to a man you never saw? Unthinking wench! Who knows what this may turn to?—What, is the lady dead?—Ah, defend me, heaven! 'tis Isabella, sister to my Felix. What has befallen her? Pray heaven he's safe.—Run and fetch some cold water.—Stay, stay, Flora—Isabella, friend, speak to me—oh, speak to me, or I shall die with apprehension.

Isa. Oh hold, my dearest father, do not force me; indeed I cannot love him.

Fio. How wild she talks!

Isa. Ha! Where am I?

Fio. With one as sensible of thy pain as thou thyself canst be.

Isa. Violante!—what kind star preserved and lodged me here?

Flora. It was a terrestrial star, called a man, madam; pray Jupiter he proves a lucky one.

Isa. Oh! I remember now. Forgive me, dear Violante; my thoughts ran so much upon the danger I escaped, I forgot.

Fio. May I not know your story?

Isa. Thou art no stranger to one part of it. I have often told thee that my father designed to sacrifice me to don Guzman, who, it seems, is just returned from Holland, and expected ashore to-morrow, the day that he has set to celebrate our nuptials. Upon my refusing to obey him, he locked me into my chamber, vowing to keep me there till he arrived, and force me to

consent. I know my father to be positive, never to be won from his design; and having no hope left me to escape the marriage, I leap'd from the window into the street.

Vio. You have not hurt yourself, I hope?

Isa. No; a gentleman passing by, by accident, caught me in his arms: at first, my fright made me apprehend it was my father, till he assured me to the contrary.

Flora. He is a very fine gentleman, I promise you, madam; and a well-bred man, I warrant him. I think I never saw a grandee put his hand into his pocket with a better air in my whole life-time; then he open'd his purse with such a grace, that nothing but his manner of presenting me with the gold could equal.

Vio. There is but one common road to the heart of a servant, and 'tis impossible for a generous person to mistake it.—Go leave us, Flora. (*Exit Flora, R.H.*) But how came you hither, Isabella?

Isa. I know not; I desired the stranger to convey me to the next monastery; but ere I reach'd the door, I saw, or fancied that I saw, Lissardo, my brother's man; and the thought that his master might not be far off, flung me into a swoon, which is all that I can remember.—Ha! what's here? (*Takes up a Letter.*) *For Colonel Briton. To be left at the post-house in Lisbon.*—This must be dropp'd by the stranger which brought me hither.

Vio. Thou art fallen into the hands of a soldier; take care he does not lay thee under contribution, girl.

Isa. I find he is a gentleman; and if he is but unmarried, I could be content to follow him all the world over.—But I shall never see him more, I fear.

(*Sighs and pauses.*)

Vio. What makes you sigh, Isabella?

Isa. The fear of falling into my father's clutches again.

Vio. Can I be serviceable to you?

Isa. Yes, if you conceal me two or three days.

Vio. You command my house and secresy.

Isa. I thank you, Violante. I wish you would oblige me with Mrs. Flora, awhile.

Vio. I'll send her to you.—I must watch if dad be still asleep, or here will be no room for Felix.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Isa. Well, I don't know what ails me; methinks I wish I could find this stranger out.

Re-enter FLORA, R.H.

Flora. Does your ladyship want me, madam?

Isa. Ay, Mrs. Flora, I resolve to make you my confidant.

Flora. I shall endeavour to discharge my duty, madam.

Isa. I doubt it not; and desire you to accept this as a token of my gratitude.

Flora. O dear signora, I should have been your humble servant without a fee.

Isa. I believe it. But to the purpose—do you think if you saw the gentleman which brought me hither, you should know him again?

Flora. From a thousand, madam: I have an excellent memory where a handsome man is concerned.—When he went away, he said he would return again immediately. I admire he comes not.

Isa. Here, did you say? You rejoice me—though I'll not see him, if he comes. Could not you contrive to give him a letter?

Flora. With the air of a duenna.

Isa. Not in this house—you must veil and follow him.—He must not know it comes from me.

Flora. What, do you take me for a novice in love affairs? Though I have not practised the art since I have been in donna Violante's service, yet I have not lost the theory of a chambermaid.—Do you write the letter, and leave the rest to me—here, here, here's pen, ink, and paper.

Isa. I'll do it in a minute. (*Sits down to write.*)

Flora. So! this is a business after my own heart: love always takes care to reward his labourers, and Great Britain seems to be his favourite country—Oh, I long to see the other two moidores with a British air. Methinks there's a grace peculiar to that nation, in making a present.

Isa. So, I have done—now if he does but find this house again.

Flor. If he should not, I warrant I'll find him, if he's in Lisbon; for I have a strong possession that he has two more moidores as good as ever were told.

(*Puts the Letter into her bosom.*)

Re-enter VIOLANTE, R.H.

Vio. Flora, watch my papa; he's fast asleep in his study: if you find him stir, give me notice. (*Felix taps at the window, L.H.*) Hark, I hear Felix at the window, admit him instantly, and then to your post.

[*Exit Flora, L.H.*

Isa. What say you, Violante? Is my brother come?

Vio. It is his signal at the window.

Isa. (*Kneels.*) Oh, Violante! I conjure thee by all the love thou bear'st to Felix, by thy own generous nature, nay more, by that unspotted virtue thou art mistress of, do not discover to my brother I am here!

Vio. Contrary to your desire, be assured I never shall. But where's the danger?

Isa. Art thou born in Lisbon, and ask that question? He'll think his honour blemished by my disobedience; and would restore me to my father, or kill me: therefore, dear, dear girl—

Vio. Depend upon my friendship; nothing shall draw the secret from these lips; not even Felix, though at the hazard of his love. I hear him coming; retire into that closet.

Isa. Remember, Violante, upon thy promise my very life depends.

[*Exit, R.H.D.*

Vio. When I betray thee, may I share thy fate!

Enter FELIX, L.H.D.

My Felix ! my everlasting love ! (*Runs into his Arms.*)

Fel. My life ! my soul ! Violante !

Vio. What hazards dost thou run for me ? Oh, how shall I requite thee ?

Fel. If, during this tedious, painful exile, thy thoughts have never wandered from thy Felix, thou hast made me more than satisfaction.

Vio. Can there be room within this heart for any but thyself ? No, if the god of love were lost to all the rest of humankind, thy image would secure him in my breast : I am all truth, all love, all faith, and know no jealous fears.

Fel. My heart's the proper sphere where love resides : could he quit that, he would be no where found ; and yet, Violante, I'm in doubt.

Vio. Did I ever give thee cause to doubt, my Felix ?

Fel. True love has many fears, and fears as many eyes as fame : yet sure I think they see no fault in thee.—(*Colonel Briton taps at the window, L.H.*) What's that ? (*Taps again.*)

Vio. What ? I hear nothing. (*Again.*)

Fel. Ha ! What means this signal at your window ?

Vio. Somewhat, perhaps, in passing by, might accidentally hit it ; it can be nothing else.

Col. B. (Within.) Hist, hist ! Donna Violante ! Donna Violante !

Fel. They use your name by accident too, do they, madam ? (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Re-enter FLORA, L.H.D.

Flora. There is a gentleman at the window, madam, which I fancy to be the same who brought Isabella hither. Shall I admit him ? (*Aside to Violante.*)

Vio. Admit distraction rather ! Thou art the cause of this, unthinking wretch ! (*Aside.*)

Fel. What, has Mrs. Scout brought you fresh intelligence? Death, I'll know the bottom of this immediately. (*Offers to go.*)

Flora. Scout! I scorn your words, seignior.

Vio. Nay, nay, nay, you must not leave me.

(*Runs and catches hold of him.*)

Fel. Oh! 'tis not fair not to answer the gentleman, madam. It is none of his fault that his visit proves unseasonable. Pray let me go; my presence is but a restraint upon you. (*Struggles to get from her.*)

Flora. It must be the colonel—now to deliver my letter to him.

[*Aside and exit, L.H. The Colonel taps louder.*]

Fel. Hark, he grows impatient at your delay. Why do you hold the man whose absence would oblige you? Pray let me go, madam. Consider, the gentleman wants you at the window.—Confusion! (*Struggles.*)

Vio. It is not me he wants.

Fel. Death! not you? Is there another of your name in the house?—But come on, convince me of the truth of what you say; open the window. If his business does not lie with you, your conversation may be heard. This, and only this, can take off my suspicion.—What, do you pause? Oh, guilt! guilt! Have I caught you? Nay, then I'll leap the balcony. If I remember, this way leads to it. (*Breaks from her, and goes to R.H.D.*)

Vio. Hold, hold, hold, hold! not for the world you enter there!—Which way shall I preserve his sister from his knowledge? (*Aside.*)

Fel. What, have I touch'd you? Do you fear your lover's life?

Vio. I fear for none but you.—For goodness' sake, do not speak so loud, my Felix. If my father hears you, I am lost for ever.—Felix! Felix! your curiosity shall be satisfied. (*Goes to the window, throws up the sash.*) Whoe'er you are, that with such insolence dare use my name, and give the neighbourhood pretence to reflect upon my conduct, I charge you instantly to be gone, or expect the treatment you deserve.

Col. B. I ask pardon, madam, and will obey; but, when I left this house to-night—

Fel. Good.

Vio. You are mistaken in the house I suppose, sir.

Fel. No, no, he's not mistaken—Pray, madam, let the gentleman go on.

Vio. Pray be gone, sir, I know of no business you have here.

Col. B. I wish I did not know it either—But this house contains my soul; then can you blame my body for hovering about it.

Fel. Excellent.

Vio. I tell you again you are mistaken; however for your own satisfaction, call to-morrow.

Fel. Matchless impudence! an assignation before my face—No, he shall not live to meet your wishes.

(Takes out a Pistol, and goes towards the Window; she catches hold of him.)

Vio. Ah! *(Shrieks.)* hold, I conjure you.

Col. B. To-morrow's an age, madam! May I not be admitted to-night?

Vio. If you be a gentleman, I command your absence.—Unfortunate, what will my stars do with me?

(Aside.)

Col. B. I have done—Only this—Be careful of my life, for it is in your keeping. *[Exit from the window.]*

Fel. Pray observe the gentleman's request, madam.

(Walks from her.)

Vio. I am all confusion.

Fel. You are all truth, all love, all faith: oh, thou all women!—How have I been deceived. 'Sdeath, could you not have imposed upon me for this one night? Could neither my faithful love, nor the hazard I have run to see you, make me worthy to be cheated on. Oh, thou—

Vio. Can I bear this from you? *(Weeps.)*

Fel. (Repeats.) "When I left this house to night" To-night, the devil! returned so soon!

Vio. Oh, Isabella! what hast thou involved me in?

(Aside.)

Fel. (Repeats). "This house contains my soul." Oh, sweet soul!

Vio. Yet I resolve to keep the secret. (*Aside.*)

Fel. (Repeats.) "Be careful of my life, for 'tis in your keeping"—Damnation!—How ugly she appears! (*Looks at her.*)

Vio. Do not look so sternly on me, but believe me, Felix, I have not injured you, nor am I false.

Fel. Not false, not injured me? Oh, Violante, lost and abandoned to thy vice! Not false! Oh, monstrous!

Vio. Indeed I am not—There is a cause which I must not reveal—Oh, think how far honour can oblige your sex—Then allow a woman may be bound by the same rule to keep a secret.

Fel. Honour! What hast thou to do with honour, thou that canst admit plurality of lovers? A secret! ha, ha, ha! his affairs are wondrous safe, who trusts his secrets to a woman's keeping: but you need give yourself no trouble about clearing this point, madam, for you are become so indifferent to me, that your truth and falsehood are the same

Vio. My love.

Fel. My Torment!

Re-enter FLORA, L.B.D.

Flora. So I have delivered my letter to the colonel, and received my fee. Madam, your father bade me see what noise that was—For goodness' sake, sir, why do you speak so loud?

Fel. I understand my cue, mistress; my absence is necessary, I'll oblige you.

(*Going, she takes hold of him.*)

Vio. Oh, let me undeceive you first.

Fel. Impossible.

Vio. 'Tis very possible, if I durst.

Fel. Durst! ha, ha, ha! durst, quotha!

Vio. But another time I'll tell thee all.

Fel. Nay, now or never.

Vio. Now it cannot be.

Fel. Then it shall never be.—Thou most ungrateful of thy sex, farewell.

[*Breaks from her, and exit, L.H.D.*

Vio. Oh, exquisite trial of my friendship! Yet not even this shall draw the secret from me.

That I'll preserve, let fortune frown or smile;
And trust to love, my love to reconcile.

[*Exit, R.H.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter DON LOPEZ, L.H.

Lop. Was ever man thus plagued! Odsheart! I could swallow my dagger for madness; I know not what to think; sure Frederic had no hand in her escape—She must get out of the window; and she could not do that without a ladder: and who could bring it her but him? Aye, it must be so. This graceless baggage—But I'll to Frederic immediately; I'll take the alguazil with me, and search his house; and if I find her, I'll use her—by St. Anthony, I don't know how I'll use her.

[*Exit, R.H.*

Enter COLONEL BRITON, with ISABELLA's Letter in his hand; GIBBY following, L.H.

Col. B. Well, though I could not see my fair incognita, fortune, to make me amends, has flung another intrigue in my way. Oh! how I love these pretty, kind, coming females, that wont give a man the trouble on

racking his invention to deceive them.—This letter I received from a lady in a veil—Some duenna: some necessary implement of Cupid. I suppose the style is frank and easy, I hope like her that writ it.—(*Reads.*) *Sir, I have seen your person and like it—very concise—And if you'll meet me at four o'clock in the morning upon the Terriero de Passa, half an hour's conversation will let me into your mind—Ha, ha, ha!* a philosophical wench; this is the first time I ever knew a woman had any business with the mind of a man—*if your intellects answer your outward appearance, the adventure may not displease you. I expect you'll not attempt to see my face, nor offer any thing unbecoming the gentleman I take you for.*—Humph, the gentleman she takes me for! I hope she takes me to be flesh and blood, and then I'm sure I shall do nothing unbecoming a gentleman. Well, if I must not see her face, it shall go hard if I don't know where she lives.—Gibby.

Gibby. Here and lik yer honour.

Col. B. Follow me at a good distance, do you hear, Gibby?

Gibby. In troth dee I, weel eneugh, sir.

Col. B. I am to meet a lady on the Terriero de Passa.

Gibby. The deel an mine cyn gin I ken her, sir.

Col. B. But you will when you come there, sirrah.

Gibby. Like eneugh, sir; I have as sharp an cyn tul a bonny lass as ere a lad in aw Scotland: and what mun I dee wi' her, sir?

Col. B. Why, if she and I part, you must watch her home, and bring me word where she lives.

Gibby. In troth, sall I, sir, gin the deel tak her not.

Col. B. Come along, then; 'tis pretty near the time—I like a woman that rises early to pursue her inclination.

Thus we improve the pleasures of the day,
While tasteless mortals sleep their time away.

[*Exeunt*, R.H.]

SCENE II.—*Frederic's House.**Enter INIS and LISSARDO, R.H.*

Lis. Your lady run away, and you know not whither, say you?

Inis. She never greatly cared for me after finding you and I together: but you are very grave, methinks, Lissardo.

Lis. (*Looking on the Ring.*) Not at all—I have some thoughts, indeed, of altering my course of living; there is a critical minute in every man's life, which, if he can but lay hold of, he may make his fortune.

Inis. Ha! what do I see? a diamond ring! where the deuce had he that ring? (*Aside.*) You have got a very pretty ring there, Lissardo.

Lis. Ay, the trifle is pretty enough; but the lady which gave it to me is a bona roba, in beauty, I assure you. (*Cocks his hat, and struts.*)

Inis. I can't bear this—the lady! (*Aside.*) What lady, pray?

Lis. O fie! There's a question to ask a gentleman.

Inis. A gentleman! Why the fellow's spoil'd! Is this your love for me? Ungrateful man, you'll break my heart, so you will. (*Bursts into Tears.*)

Lis. Poor tender-hearted fool—(*Aside.*)

Inis. If I knew who gave you that ring, I'd tear her eyes out, so I would. (*Sobs.*)

Lis. So, now the jade wants a little coaxing. (*Aside.*) Why, what dost weep for now my dear, ha?

Inis. I suppose Flora gave you that ring; but I'll—

Lis. No, the devil take me if she did; you make me swear now—So, they are all for the ring; but I shall bob 'em. (*Aside.*) I did but joke; the ring is none of mine, it is my master's; I am to give it to be new set, that's all; therefore pr'ythee dry thy eyes, and kiss me, come.

Enter FLORA, unobserved, L.H.

Inis. And do you really speak truth now?

Lis. Why do you doubt it?

Flora. So, so, very well! I thought there was an intrigue between him and Inis, for all he has forsworn it so often. (*Aside.*)

Inis. Nor ha'n't you seen Flora, since you came to town?

Flora. Ha! how dares she mention my name?
(*Aside.*)

Lis. No, by this kiss, I ha'n't. (*Kisses her.*)

Flora. Here's a dissembling varlet. (*Aside.*)

Inis. Nor don't you love her at all?

Lis. Love the devil! why did I not always tell thee she was my aversion?

Flora. Did you so, villain?
(*Gives him a box on the Ear.*)

Lis. Zounds, she's here! I have made a fine piece of work on't. (*Aside.*)

Inis. What's that for, ha? (*Goes up to her.*)

Flora. I shall tell you by-and-by, Mrs. Frippery, if you don't get about your business.

Inis. Who do you call Frippery, Mrs. Trollop? Pray get about your business, if you go to that; I hope you pretend to no right and title here.

Lis. What the devil do they take me for an acre of land, that they quarrel about right and title to me?
(*Aside.*)

Flora. Pray what right have you, mistress, to ask that question?

Inis. No matter for that, I can show a better title to him than you, I believe.

Flora. What has he given thee nine months' earnest for a living title? ha, ha!

Inis. Don't fling your flaunting jests at me, Mrs. Boldface, for I won't take 'em, I assure you.

Lis. So, now I am as great as the famed Alexander. But my dear Statira and Roxana, don't exert yourselves so much about me: now I fancy if you would agree lovingly together, I might, in a modest way, satisfy both your demands upon me.

Flora. You satisfy! No sirrah, I am not to be satisfied so soon as you think, perhaps.

Inis. No, nor I neither.—What, do you make no difference between us?

Flora. You pitiful fellow, you! What you fancy, I warrant, that I gave myself the trouble of dogging you out of love to your filthy person; but you are mistaken, sirrah—It was to detect your treachery—How often have you sworn to me that you hated Inis, and only carried fair for the good cheer she gave you; but that you could never like a woman with crooked legs, you said.

Inis. How, how, sirrah, crooked legs! Odds, I could find in my heart—(*Snatches up her petticoat a little.*)

Lis. Here's a lying young jade, now! Pr'ythee, my dear, moderate thy passion. (*Coaxingly.*)

Inis. I'd have you to know, sirrah, my legs were never—Your master, I hope, understands legs better than you do, sirrah. (*Passionately.*)

Lis. My master, so. (*Shakes his Head, and winks.*)

Flora. I am glad I have done some mischief, however. (*Aside.*)

Lis. (*To Inis.*) Art thou really so foolish to mind what an enraged woman says? Don't you see she does it on purpose to part you and I? (*Runs to Flora.*) Could not you find the joke without putting yourself in a passion? you silly girl, you. Why I saw you follow us plain enough, and said all this that you might not go back with only your labour for your pains—But you are a revengeful young slut though, I tell you that; but come, kiss and be friends.

Flora. Don't think to coax me—hang your kisses.

Ret. (*Without, L.N.*) Lissardo.

Lis. Odsheart, here's my master: the devil take both

these jades for me, what shall I do with them?

(*Aside.*)

Inis. Ha! 'tis don Felix's voice; I would not have him find me here with his footman for the world.

(*Aside.*)

Fel. (*Without, L.H.*) Why, Lissardo, Lissardo!

Lis. Coming, sir. What a plague will you do?

Flora. Bless me, which way shall I get out?

Lis. Nay, nay, you must e'en set your quarrel aside, and be content to be mew'd up in this clothes-press together, or stay where you are, and face it out—there is no help for it.

Flora. Put me any where, rather than that: come come, let me in. (*He opens the Press, and she goes in.*)

Inis. I'll see her hang'd before I'll go into the place where she is.—I'll trust fortune with my deliverance. Here used to be a pair of back stairs: I'll try to find them out.

[*Exit, R.H.S.E.*]

Enter DON FELIX and FREDERIC, L.H

Fel. Was you asleep, sirrah, that you did not hear me call?

Lis. I did hear you, and answered you I was coming, sir.

Fel. Go, get the horses ready; I'll leave Lisbon to-night, never to see it more.

Lis. Hey-day! what's the matter now?

[*Exit, L.H.D.*]

Fred. Pray tell me, don Felix, what has ruffled your temper thus?

Fel. A woman—Oh, friend, who can name woman, and forget inconstancy?

Fred. This from a person of mean education were excusable; such low suspicions have their source from vulgar conversation; men of your politer taste never rashly censure—Come, this is some groundless jealousy—Love raises many fears.

Fel. No, no; my ears conveyed the truth into my heart, and reason justifies my anger. Oh, my friend

Violante's false, and I have nothing left but thee in, Lisbon, which can make me wish ever to see it more ; except revenge upon my rival, of whom I am ignorant, Oh, that some miracle would reveal him to me, that I might through his heart punish her infidelity !

Re-enter LISSARDO, L.H.D.

Lis. Oh, sir ! here's your father, don Lopez, coming up.

Fel. Does he know that I am here ?

Lis. I can't tell, sir ; he asked for don Frederic.

Fred. Did he see you ?

Lis. I believe not, sir ; for as soon as I saw him, I ran back to give my master notice.

Fel. Keep out of his sight then.

[Exit Lissardo, L.H.]

And dear Frederic, permit me to retire into the next room, for I know the old gentleman will be very much displeased at my return without his leave. *[Exit, R.H.D.]*

Fred. Quick, quick, be gone ; he is here.

Enter DON LOPEZ, speaking as he enters, L.H.D.

Lop. Mr. Alguazil, wait you without till I call for you. Frederic, an affair brings me here—which—requires privacy—so that if you have any body within ear-shot, pray order them to retire.

Fred. We are private, my lord ; speak freely.

Lop. Why, then, sir, I must tell you that you had better have pitched upon any man in Portugal to have injured than myself.

Fred. I understand you not, my lord.

Lop. Though I am old, I have a son—Alas, why name I him ? he knows not the dishonour of my house.

Fred. Explain yourself, my lord : I am not conscious of any dishonourable action to any man, much less to your lordship.

Lop. 'Tis false ! you have debauched my daughter.

Fred. My lord, I scorn so foul a charge.

Lop. You have debauched her duty at least, therefore instantly restore her to me, or, by St. Anthony, I'll make you.

Fred. Restore her, my lord! where shall I find her?

Lop. I have those that will swear she is here in your house.

Fred. You are misinformed, my lord; upon my reputation, I have not seen donna Issabella since the absence of don Felix.

Lop. Then pray, sir—if I am not too inquisitive, what motive had you for those objections you made against her marriage with don Guzman yesterday?

Fred. The disagreeableness of such a match, I fear'd would give your daughter cause to curse her duty, if she complied with your demands; that was all, my lord.

Lop. And so you helped her through the window, to make her disobey.

Fred. This is insulting me, my lord, when I assure you, I have neither seen nor known any thing of your daughter—If she is gone, the contrivance was her own, and you may thank your rigour for it.

Lop. Very well, sir; however, my rigour shall make bold to search your house. Here, call in the alguazil—

Flora. (*Peeps.*) The alguazil! What, in the name of wonder, will become of me?

Fred. The alguazil! My lord, you'll repent this.

Enter Alguazil and Attendants, L.H.

Lop. No, sir, 'tis you that will repent it. I charge you, in the king's name, to assist me in finding my daughter.—Be sure you leave no part of the house unsearched. Come, follow me.

(*Gets towards the Door where Felix is: Frederic draws, and plants himself before it.*)

Fred. Sir, I must first know by what authority you pretend to search my house, before you enter here.

Alg. How, sir, dare you presume to draw your

sword upon the representative of majesty? I am, sir, his majesty's alguazil, and the very quintessence of authority—therefore put up your sword, or I shall order you to be knock'd down—For know, sir, the breath of an alguazil is as dangerous as the breath of a demi-culverin.

Lop. She is certainly in that room, by his guarding the door—if he disputes your authority, knock him down, I say.

Fred. I shall show you some sport first! The woman you look for is not here; but there is something in this room which I'll preserve from your sight at the hazard of my life.

Lop. Enter, I say; nothing but my daughter can be there—Force his sword from him.

(Felix comes out of R.H.D and joins Frederic.)

Fel. Villains, stand off! assassinate a man in his own house!

Lop. Oh, oh, oh, misericordia! what do I see, my son!

Alg. Ha, his son! Here's five hundred pounds good, my brethren, if Antonio dies; and that's in the surgeon's power, and he's in love with my daughter, you know, so seize him—

Lop. Hold, hold! Oh that ever I was born!

Fred. Did I not tell you you would repent, my lord? What, ho! within there.

Enter VASQUES, R.H.

Arm yourselves, and let not a man in or out but Felix.

[Exit Vasquez, R.H.D.]

Fel. Generous Frederic!

Fred. Look ye, alguazil; when you would betray my friend for filthy lucre, I shall no more regard you as an officer of justice; but as a thief and robber thus resist you.

Fel. Come on, sir; we'll show you play for the five hundred pounds.

Re-enter VASQUES and Servants, R.H.

Lop. Hold, hold, alguazil; I'll give you the five hundred pounds; that is, my bond to pay upon Antonio's death, and twenty pistoles, however things go, for you and these honest fellows to drink my health.

Alg. Say you so, my lord? Why, look ye, my lord, I bear the young gentleman no ill-will, my lord; if I but get the five hundred pounds, my lord—why, look ye, my lord—'tis the same thing to me whether your son be hang'd or not, my lord.

Fel. Scoundrels! [*Exeunt Serrants, R.H.*]

Lop. Ay, well, thou art a good-natured fellow, that is the truth on't—Come, then, we'll to the tavern, and sign and seal this minute. Oh, Felix! why wouldst thou serve me thus?—But I cannot upbraid thee now, nor have I time to talk. Be careful of thyself, for thou wilt break my heart.

[*Exeunt Lopez, Alguazil, and Attendants, followed by Vasques, L.H.*]

Fel. Now, Frederic, though I ought to thank you for your care of me, yet till I am satisfied as to my father's accusation, for I overheard it all, I can't return the acknowledgments I owe you. Know you aught relating to my sister?

Fren. I hope my faith and truth are known to you—and here by both I swear, I am ignorant of every thing relative to your father's charge.

Fel. Enough; I do believe thee. Oh, fortune! where will thy malice end?

Re-enter VASQUEZ, L.H.

Vas. Sir, I bring you joyful news.

Fel. What's the matter?

Vas. I am told that don Antonio is out of danger, and now in the palace.

Fel. I wish it be true; then I'm at liberty to watch.

my rival, and pursue my sister. Pr'ythee, Frederic, inform thyself of the truth of this report.

Fred. I will this minute—Do you hear? let nobody in to don Felix till my return. [*To Vasquez. Exit, L.H.*

Vas. I'll observe, sir. [*Exit, L.H.*

Flora. (Peeps.) They have almost frightened me out of my wits—I'm sure—Now Felix is alone, I have a good mind to pretend I came with a message from my lady; but how then shall I say I came into the cupboard?

Re-enter VASQUEZ, who seems to oppose the entrance of somebody, L.H.D.

Vas. I tell you, madam, don Felix is not here.

Vio. (Within, L.H.) I tell you, sir, he is here, and I will see him.

Fel. What noise is that?

Enter VIOLANTE, L.H.D.

Vio. You are as difficult of access, sir, as a first minister of state.

Flora. My stars! my lady here!

(Shuts the Press close.)

Fel. If your visit was design'd to Frederic, madam, he is abroad.

Vio. No, sir, the visit is to you.

Fel. You are very punctual in your ceremonies, madam.

Vio. Though I did not come to return your visit, but to take that which your civility ought to have brought me.

Fel. If my eyes, my ears, and my understanding lied, then I am in your debt; else not, madam.

Vio. I will not charge them with a term so gross, to say they lied, but call it a mistake; nay, call it any thing to excuse my Felix—Could I, think ye, could I put off my pride so far, poorly to dissemble a passion which I did not feel, or seek a reconciliation with what I did not love?—No law, whilst single, binds us to obey;

but your sex are obliged to pay a deference to all woman kind.

Fel. These are fruitless arguments. 'Tis most certain thou wert dearer to these eyes than all that heaven e'er gave to charm the sense of man; but I would rather tear them out, than suffer them to delude my reason, and enslave my peace.

Vio. Can you love without esteem? and where is the esteem for her you still suspect? Oh, Felix, there is a delicacy in love, which equals even a religious faith! True love never doubts the object it adores, and sceptics there will disbelieve their sight. (*Crosses, R.H.*)

Fel. Your notions are too refined for mine, madam.

Re-enter VASQUEZ, L.H.D.

How now, sirrah, what do you want?

Vas. Only my master's cloak out of this press, sir; that's all.

Fel. Make haste then.

(*Vasquez opens the Press, and sees Flora.*)

Vas. Oh! the devil! the devil! [*Exit, L.H.*]

Flora. Discover'd! Nay, then, legs befriend me.

[*Runs out, R.H.*]

Vio. Ha! a woman conceal'd! Very well, Felix.

Fel. A woman in the press!

Re-enter LISSARDO, L.H.D.

How the devil came a woman there, sirrah?

Lis. What shall I say now? (*Aside.*)

Vio. Now, Lissardo, show your wit, to bring your master off.

Lis. Off, madam? Nay, nay, nay, there, there needs no great wit to, to, to bring him off, madam; for she did, and she did not come as, as, as a, a, a man may say, directly to, to, to, to speak with my master, madam.

Vio. I see by your stammering, Lissardo, that your invention is at a very low ebb.

Fel. 'Sdeath, rascal ! speak without hesitation, and the truth too, or I shall stick my spado in your guts.

Vio. No, no, your master mistakes ; he would not have you speak the truth.

Fel. Madam, my sincerity wants no excuse.

Lis. I am so confounded between one and the other, that I can't think of a lie. (*Aside.*)

Fel. Sirrah, fetch me this woman back instantly ; I'll know what business she had here !

Vio. Not a step ; your master shall not be put to the blush—Come, a truce, Felix ! Do you ask me no more questions about the window, and I'll forgive this.

Fel. I scorn forgiveness where I own no crime ; but your soul, conscious of its guilt, would fain lay hold of this occasion to blend your treason with my innocence.

Vio. Insolent ! Nay, if instead of owning your fault, you endeavour to insult my patience, I must tell you, sir, you don't behave yourself like that man of honour you would be taken for ; you ground your quarrel with me upon your own inconstancy ; 'tis plain you are false yourself, and would make me the aggressor.—It was not for nothing the fellow opposed my entrance.—This last usage has given me back my liberty ; (*Crosses to L.H.*) and now my father's will shall be obeyed without the least reluctance : and so your servant. [*Exit, L.H.D.*]

Fel. Oh, stubborn, stubborn heart, what wilt thou do ? Her father's will shall be obeyed ; ha ! that carries her to a cloister, and cuts off all my hopes at once—By heaven she shall not, must not leave me ! No, she is not false, at least my love now represents her true, because I fear to lose her. Ha ! villain, art thou here ? (*Turas upon Lissardo.*) Tell me this moment who this woman was, and for what intent she was here concealed—or—

Lis. Ay, good sir, forgive me, and I'll tell you the whole truth. (*Falls on his Knees.*)

Fel. Out with it then.

Lis. It, it, it was Mrs. Flora, sir, donna Violante's woman. You must know, sir, we have had a sneaking

kindness for one another a great while.—She was not willing you should know it; so, when she heard your voice, she ran into the clothes-press. I would have told you this at first, but I was afraid of her lady's knowing it; this is the truth, as I hope for a whole skin, sir.

Fel. If it be not, I'll not leave you a whole bone in it, sirrah—Fly, and observe if Violante goes directly home.

Lis. Yes, sir, yes.

Fel. Fly, you dog, fly. [*Exit Lissardo, L.H.D.*] I must convince her of my faith. Oh! how irresolute is a lover's heart!—How absolute is a woman's power!

In vain we strive their tyranny to quit;

In vain we struggle, for we must submit. [*Exit, R.H.*]

SCENE III.—*The Terriero de Passa.*

Enter COLONEL BRITON, and ISABELLA veiled, R.H.; GIBBY at a distance.

Col. B. Then you say it is impossible for me to wait upon you home, madam?

Isa. I say, it is inconsistent with my circumstances, colonel, and that way impossible for me to admit of it.

Col. B. Consent to go with me, then.—I lodge at one don Frederic's, a merchant, just by here: he is a very honest fellow, and I dare confide in his secrecy.

Isa. Ha! does he lodge there? Pray heaven I am not discovered. (*Aside.*)

Col. B. What say you, my charmer? shall we breakfast together; I have some of the best tea in the universe.

Isa. Pooh! tea! Is that the best treat you can give a lady at your lodgings, colonel?

Col. B. Well hinted. (*Aside.*) No, no, no, I have other things at thy service, child.

Isa. What are these things, pray?

Col. B. My heart, soul, and body into the bargain.

Isa. Has the last no incumbrance upon it? Can you make a clear title, colonel?

Col. B. All freehold, child; and I'll afford thee a very good bargain. (*Embraces her.*)

Gibby. O'my sol, they mak muckle words about it. Ise sair weary with standing; Ise e'en take a sleep.

(*Aside. Lies down.*)

Isa. If I take a lease, it must be for life, colonel.

Col. B. Thou shalt have me as long, or as little time as thou wilt, my dear. Come let's to my lodging, and we'll sign and seal this minute.

Isa. Oh, not so fast, colonel; there are many things to be adjusted, before the lawyer and the parson comes.

Col. B. The lawyer and parson? No, no, you little rogue, we can finish our affairs without the help of the law—or the gospel.

Isa. Indeed but we can't, colonel:

Col. B. Indeed! Why, hast thou then trepanned me out of my warm bed this morning for nothing? Why, this is showing a man, half-famish'd, a well-furnish'd larder, then clapping a padlock on the door, till you starve him quite.

Isa. If you can find in your heart to say grace, colonel, you shall keep the key.

Col. B. I love to see my meat before I give thanks, madam; therefore uncover thy face, child, and I'll tell thee more of my mind. If I like you—

Isa. I dare not risk my reputation upon your ifs, colonel, and so adieu. (*Going.*)

Col. B. Nay, nay, nay, we must not part.

Isa. As you ever hope to see me more, suspend your curiosity now; one step further loses me for ever.—Show yourself a man of honour, and you shall find me a woman of honour.

Col. B. Well, for once, I'll trust to a blind bargain, madam. [*Kisses her Hand. Exit Isabella, L.H.*] But I shall be too cunning for your ladyship, if Gibby observes my orders. Methinks, these intrigues which relate to the mind are very insipid—the conversation of bodies is much more diverting.—Ha! what do I

see? my rascal asleep! Sirrah, did not I charge you to watch the lady? And is it thus you observe my orders, you dog?

(*Kicks Gibby all this while; Gibby shrugs, rubs his eyes, and yawns.*)

Gibby. That's true, and like yer honour; but I thought when yence you had her in yer ane honds, ye might a ordered her yer sel well eneugh without me, en ye ken, an like yer honour.

Col. B. Sirrah, hold your impertinent tongue, and make haste after her. If you don't bring me some account of her, never dare to see my face again.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Gibby. Ay, this is bony wark indeed! to run three hundred mile to this wicked town, and before I can well fill my weam, to be sent a whore-hunting after this black she-devil!—What gate sal I gang to speer for this wutch now? Ah, for a ruling elder—or the kirk's treasurer—or his mon—I'd gar my master mak twa o'this.—But I am sure there's na sick honest people here, or there wud na be sa mickle sculddudrie.

Enter a Soldier, R.H. passing along.

Good mon, did ye see a woman, a lady, ony gate here awe e'en now?

Sol. Yes, a great many. What kind of a woman is it you enquire after?

Gibby. Geud troth, she's na kenspekle; she's aw in a cloud.

Sol. What, 'tis some Highland monster, which you brought over with you, I suppose. I see no such, not I. Kenspekle, quotha!

Gibby. Huly, huly, mon; the deel pike out yer een, and then ye'll see the bater, ye Portiguise tike.

Sol. What says the fellow? (*Turns to Gibby.*)

Gibby. Say? I say I am a better fellow than e'er stude upon your shanks—and gin I heer nair o'yer din, deel o'my saul, sir, but Ise crack your croon.

Sol. Get you gone, you Scotch rascal, and thank

your heathen dialect, which I don't understand, that you ha'n't your bones broke.

Gibby. Ay, an ye dinna understand a Scotsman's tongue, Ise see gin ye can understand a Scotsman's gripe. Wha's the better mon now, sir?

(Lays hold of him, strikes up his heels, and gets astride over him.)

VIOLANTE crosses the stage, R.H. GIBBY jumps from the Soldier, and brushes up to her.

I vow, madam, but I am glad that ye and I are fore-gather'd. *[Exit Soldier, L.H.]*

Vio. What would the fellow have?

Gibby. Nothing away, madam, no worth yer heart, what a muckle deal o'mischief had you like to bring upon poor Gibby!

Vio. The man's drunk.

Gibby. In troth am I not.—And gin I had no found ye, madam, the Laird knows when I should; for my master bad me ne'er gang hame without tidings of ye, madam.

Vio. Sirrah, get about your business, or I'll have your bones drubb'd.

Gibby. Geud faith, my maister has e'en done that t'yer honds, madam.

Vio. Who is your master, sir?

Gibby. Mony a ane speers the gate they ken right weel. It is no sa lang sen ye parted wi' him. I wish he ken ye hafe as weel as ye ken him.

Vio. Poh, the creature's mad, or mistakes me for somebody else; and I should be as mad as he, to talk to him any longer.

(Enters Don Pedro's House, L.H.D.)

Enter LISSARDO, R.H.U.E.

Lis. So, she's gone home, I see. What did that Scotch fellow want with her? I'll try to find it out;

perhaps I may discover something that may make my master friends with me again.

Gibby. Are ye gone, madam? A deel scope in yer company; for I'm as weese as I was. But I'll bide and see wha's house it is, gin I can meet with ony civil body to speer at. (*Turns and sees Lissardo.*) My lad, wot ye wha lives here?

Lis. Don Pedro de Mendoza.

Gibby. And did you see a lady gang in but now?

Lis. Yes, I did.

Gibby. And d'ye ken her tee?

Lis. It was donna Violante, his daughter.—What the devil makes him so inquisitive! Here is something in it, that's certain. (*Aside.*) 'Tis a cold morning, brother, what think you of a dram?

Gibby. In troth, very weel, sir.

Lis. You seem an honest fellow; pr'ythee, let's drink to our better acquaintance.

Gibby. Wi' aw my heart, sir, gang your gate to the next house, and Ise follow ye.

Lis. Come, along then. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Gibby. Don Pedro de Mendoza—Donna Violante, his daughter—That's as right as my leg, now—Ise need na mare; I'll tak a drink, and then to my maister.

I'll bring him news will mak his heart full blee;

Gin he rewards it not, deel pimp for me. [*Exit, R.H.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Violante's Lodging.*

Enter ISABELLA, in a gay temper, and VIOLANTE, out of humour, L.H.

Isa. My dear, I have been seeking you this half hour, to tell you the most lucky adventure.

Vio. And you have pitched upon the most unlucky hour for it, that you could possibly have found in the whole four and twenty.

Isa. Hang unlucky hours, I wont think of them; I hope all my misfortunes are past,

Vio. And mine all to come.

Isa. I have seen the man I like.

Vio. And I have seen the man that I could wish to hate.

Isa. And you must assist me in discovering whether he can like me or not.

Vio. You have assisted me in such a discovery already, I thank ye.

Isa. What say you, my dear?

Vio. I say I am very unlucky at discoveries, Isabella; I have too lately made one pernicious to my ease; your brother is false.

Isa. Impossible!

Vio. Most true.

Isa. Some villain has traduced him to you.

Vio. No, Isabella, I love too well to trust the eyes of others; I never credit the ill-judging world, or form suspicions upon vulgar censures; no, I had ocular proof of his ingratitude.

Isa. Then I am most unhappy. My brother was the only pledge of faith betwixt us; if he has forfeited your favour, I have no title to your friendship.

Vio. You wrong my friendship, Isabella; your own merit entitles you to everything within my power.

Isa. Generous maid—But may I not know what grounds you have to think my brother false?

Vio. Another time. But tell me, Isabella, how can I serve you?

Isa. Thus, then—The gentleman that brought me hither, I have seen and talked with upon the Terriero de Passa this morning; and I find him a man of sense, generosity, and good-humour: in short, he is every thing that I could like for a husband, and I have dispatched Mrs. Flora to bring him hither—I hope you'll forgive the liberty I have taken.

Vio. Hither! to what purpose?

Isa. To the great universal purpose, matrimony.

Vio. Matrimony! Why, do you design to ask him?

Isa. No, Violante, you must do that for me.

Vio. I thank you for the favour you design me, but desire to be excused: I manage my own affairs too ill, to be trusted with those of other people; I can't, for my life, admire your conduct—to encourage a person altogether unknown to you.—'Twas very imprudent to meet him this morning, but much more so to send for him hither, knowing what inconveniency you have already drawn upon me.

Isa. I am not insensible how far my misfortunes have embarrassed you; and, if you please, will sacrifice my quiet to your own.

Vio. Unkindly urged! Have I not preferred your happiness to every thing that's dear to me?

Isa. I know thou hast; then do not deny me this last request, when a few hours, perhaps, may render my condition able to clear thy fame, and bring my brother to thy feet for pardon.

Vio. I wish you don't repent of this intrigue. I suppose he knows you are the same woman that he brought in here last night?

Isa. Not a syllable of that: I met him veiled; and to prevent his knowing the house, I ordered Mrs. Flora to bring him by the back-door into the garden.

Vio. The very way which Felix comes; if they should meet, there would be fine work. Indeed, my dear, I can't approve of your design.

Enter FLORA, L.H.

Flora. Madam, the colonel waits your pleasure.

Vio. How durst you go upon such a message, mistress, without acquainting me?

Flora. So, I am huffed for everything.

Isa. 'Tis too late to dispute that now, dear Violante; I acknowledge the rashness of the action—but consider the necessity of my deliverance.

Vio. That, indeed, is a weighty consideration: well, what am I to do?

Isa. In the next room I'll give you instructions—In the mean time, Mrs. Flora, show the colonel into this.

[*Exeunt Flora, L.H.D. Isabella and Violante, R.H.*]

Re-enter FLORA, with COLONEL BRITON, L.H.D.

Flora. The lady will wait on you presently, sir.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Col. B. Very well. This is a very fruitful soil: I have not been here quite four-and-twenty hours, and I have three intrigues upon my hands already; but I hate the chase without partaking of the game.

Re-enter VIOLANTE, R.H. veiled.

Ha! a fine-sized woman—Pray heaven she proves handsome. (*Aside.*) I am come to obey your ladyship's commands.

Vio. Are you sure of that, colonel?

Col. B. If you be not very unreasonable, indeed, madam. A man is but a man. (*Takes her hand, and kisses it.*)

Vio. Nay, we have no time for compliments, colonel.

Col. B. I understand you, madam—Montrez moi votre chambre. (*Takes her in his arms.*)

Vio. Nay, nay, hold, colonel, my bed-chamber is not to be entered without a certain purchase.

Col. B. Purchase! Humph, this is some kept mistress, I suppose, who industriously lets out her leisure hours. (*Aside.*) Look you, madam, you must consider we soldiers are not overstocked with money—But we make ample satisfaction in love; we have a world of courage upon our hands now, you know—Then, prythee, use a conscience, and I'll try if my pocket can come up to your price.

Vio. Nay, don't give yourself the trouble of draw-

ing your purse, colonel; my design is levelled at your person, if that be at your own disposal.

Col. B. Ay, that it is; faith, madam, and I'll settle it as firmly upon thee——

Vio. As faw can do it?

Col. B. Hang law in love affairs; thou shalt have right and title to it out of pure inclination.—A matrimonial hint again. (*Aside.*)

Vio. Then you have an aversion to matrimony, colonel? Did you never see a woman, in all your travels, that you could like for a wife?

Col. B. A very odd question. (*Aside.*) Do you really expect that I should speak truth, now?

Vio. I do, if you expect to be dealt with, colonel.

Col. B. Why, then—yes.

Vio. Is she in your country, or this?

Col. B. This is a very pretty kind of a catechism! (*Aside.*) In this town, I believe, madam.

Vio. Her name is——

Col. B. Ay, how is she call'd, madam?

Vio. Nay, I ask you that, sir.

Col. B. Oh, oh, why she is called—Pray, madam, how is it you spell your name?

Vio. Oh, colonel, I am not the happy woman, nor do I wish it.

Col. B. No: I'm sorry for that.—What the devil does she mean by all these questions? (*Aside.*)

Vio. Come, colonel, for once be sincere—perhaps you may not repent it.

Col. B. This is like to be but a silly adventure, here's so much sincerity required. (*Aside.*) Faith, madam, I have an inclination to sincerity; but I'm afraid you'll call my manners in question.

Vio. Not at all; I prefer truth before compliment, in this affair.

Col. B. Why, then, to be plain with you, madam—a lady last night wounded my heart by a fall from a window, whose person I could be content to take, as my father took my mother, till death do us part; but

whom she is, or how distinguished, whether maid, wife, or widow, I can't inform you. Perhaps you are she?

Vio. Not to keep you in suspense, I am not she, but I can give you an account of her. That lady is a maid of condition, has ten thousand pounds; and if you are a single man, her person and fortune are at your service.

Col. B. I accept the offer with the highest transports; but say, my charming angel, art thou not she? (*Offers to embrace her.*)

Vio. Once again, colonel, I tell you I am not she—but at six this evening you shall find her on the Terrero de Passa, with a white handkerchief in her hand. Get a priest ready, and you know the rest.

Col. B. I shall infallibly observe your directions, madam.

Re-enter FLORA, R.H. hastily, and whispers VIO-LANTE, who starts and seems surprised.

Vio. Ha! Felix crossing the garden, say you? what shall I do now?

Col. B. You seem surprised, madam.

Vio. Oh, colonel, my father is coming hither; and if he finds you here I am ruin'd.

Col. B. Odslife, madam, thrust me anywhere. Can't I go out this way?

Vio. No, no, no, he comes that way. How shall I prevent their meeting? Here, here, step into my bed-chamber——

Col. B. Oh, the best place in the world, madam.

Vio. And be still, as you value her you love. Don't stir till you've notice, as ever you hope to have her in your arms.

Col. B. On that condition, I'll not breathe.

[*Exit, R.H.D.*]

Enter FELIX, L.H.D.

Fel. I wonder where this dog of a servant is all this

while ! But she is at home, I find—How coldly she regards me ! (*Aside.*) You look, Violante, as if the sight of me were troublesome to you.

Vio. Can I do otherwise, when you have the assurance to approach me, after what I saw to-day ?

Fel. Assurance ! rather call it good-nature, after what I heard last night. But such regard to honour have I in my love to you, I cannot bear to be suspected, nor suffer you to entertain false notions of my truth, without endeavouring to convince you of my innocence ; so much good-nature have I more than you, Violante. Pray give me leave to ask your woman one question ; my man assures me she was the person you saw at my lodgings.

Flora. I confess it, madam, and ask your pardon.

Vio. Impudent baggage, not to undeceive me sooner ! What business could you have there ?

Fel. Lissardo and she, it seems, imitate you and I.

Flora. I love to follow the example of my betters, madam.

Fel. I hope I am justified——

Vio. Since we are to part, Felix, there needs no justification.

Fel. Methinks you talk of parting as a thing indifferent to you. Can you forget how I have loved ?

Vio. I wish I could forget my own passion, I should with less concern remember your's——But, for Mrs. Flora——

Fel. You must forgive her—Must, did I say ? I fear I have no power to impose, though the injury was done to me.

Vio. 'Tis harder to pardon an injury done to what we love than to ourselves ; but, at your request, Felix, I do forgive her. Go watch my father, Flora, lest he should awake, and surprize us.

Flora. Yes, madam.

[*Exit, R.H.*

Fel. Dost thou, then, love me, Violante ?

Vio. What need of repetition from my tongue, when every look confesses what you ask ?

Fel. Oh, let no man judge of love but those who

feel it ! what wondrous magic lies in one kind look !— One tender word destroys a lover's rage, and melts his fiercest passion into soft complaint. Oh, the window, Violante ; wouldst thou but clear that one suspicion !

Vio. Pr'ythee, no more of that, my Felix ; a little time shall bring thee perfect satisfaction.

Fel. Well, Violante, on condition you think no more of a monastery, I'll wait with patience for this mighty secret.

Vio. Ah, Felix, love generally gets the better of religion in us women. Resolutions made in the heat of passion ever dissolve upon reconciliation.

Re-enter FLORA, R.H. hastily.

Flora. Oh, madam, madam, madam, my lord, your father, has been in the house, and locked the back door, and comes muttering to himself this way.

Vio. Then we are caught. Now, Felix, we are undone.

Fel. Heaven forbid ! This is most unlucky ! Let me step into your bed-chamber, he wont look under the bed ; there I may conceal myself. (*Runs to the door, and pushes it open a little.*)

Vio. No, no, Felix, that's no safe place ; my father often goes thither ; and should you cough, or sneeze, we are lost.

Fel. Either my eye deceived me, or I saw a man within. I'll watch him close. (*Aside.*)

Flora. Oh, invention, invention ! I have it, madam. Here, here, sir : off with your sword, and I'll fetch you a disguise. [*Exit, R.H. S.E.*]

Fel. She shall deal with the devil, if she conveys him out without my knowledge. (*Aside.*)

Vio. Bless me, how I tremble !

Re-enter FLORA, R.H. S.E. with a riding-hood.

Flora. Here, sir, put on this. Be sure you don't speak a word.

Fel. Not for the Indies. (*Puts on the hood.*)

Ped. (*Within, L.H.*) Why, how came the garden-door open?

Enter DON PEDRO, L.H.D.

Ha! how now! Who have we here?

Flora. 'Tis my mother, and please you, sir. (*She and Felix curtsey.*)

Ped. Your mother! By St. Andrew she's a strapper; why you are a dwarf to her. How many children have you, good woman?

Vio. Oh, if he speaks we are lost! (*Aside.*)

Flora. Oh, dear seignior, she cannot hear you; she has been deaf these twenty years.

Ped. Alas, poor woman! Why, you muffle her up as if she was blind too; turn up her hood.

Vio. Undone for ever! St. Anthony forbid. (*Aside.*) Oh, sir, she has the dreadfulest unlucky eyes—Pray don't look upon them; I made her keep her hood shut on purpose—Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Ped. Eyes! Why, what's the matter with her eyes?

Flora. My poor mother, sir, is much afflicted with the colic; and, about two months ago, she had it grievously in her stomach, and was over-persuaded to take a dram of filthy English Geneva, which immediately flew up into her head, and caused such a deluxion in her eyes, that she could never since bear the day-light.

Ped. Say you so? Poor woman! Well, make her sit down, Violante, and give her a glass of wine.

Vio. Let her daughter give her a glass below, sir; for my part, she has frighten'd me so, I sha'n't be myself these two hours. I am sure her eyes are evil eyes.

Ped. Well, well, do so—Evil eyes! there are no evil eyes, child.

Flora. Come along, mother. (*Speaks loud.*)

Ped. Good bye, good woman.

[*Exeunt Felix and Flora, L.H.D.*

Vio. I'm glad he's gone. (*Aside.*)

Ped. Hast thou heard the news, Violante?

Vio. What news, sir?

Ped. Why, Vasquez tells me, that don Lopez's daughter, Isabella, is run away from her father; that lord has very ill fortune with his children.—Well, I'm glad my daughter has no inclination to mankind, that my house is plagued with no suitors. (*Aside.*)

Vio. This is the first word I ever heard of it: I pity her frailty!

Ped. Well said, Violante. Next week I intend thy happiness shall begin.

Re-enter FLORA, L.H.D.

Vio. I don't intend so stay so long, thank you, papa.—(*Aside.*)

Ped. My lady abbess writes word she longs to see thee, and has provided everything in order for thy reception. Thou wilt lead a happy life, my girl—fifty times before that of matrimony, where an extravagant coxcomb might make a beggar of thee, or an ill-natured surly dog break thy heart.

Flora. Break her heart! She had as good have her bones broke as to be a nun; I am sure I had rather, of the two. (*Aside.*) You are wondrous kind, sir; but if I had such a father, I know what I would do.

Ped. Why, what would you do, minx, ha?

Flora. I would tell him I had as good a right and title to the law of nature, and the end of the creation, as he had.

Ped. You would, mistress! who the devil doubts it? A good assurance is a chambermaid's coat of arms; and lying and contriving, the supporters. Your inclinations are on tiptoe, it seems—If I were your father, housewife, I'd have a penance enjoined you, so strict, that you should not be able to turn you in your bed for a month.—You are enough to spoil your lady, housewife, if she had not abundance of devotion.

Vio. Fie, Flora, are you not ashamed to talk thus to

my father? You said, yesterday, you would be glad to go with me into the monastery.

Flora. Did I? I told a great lie, then.

Ped. She go with thee! No, no; she's enough to debauch the whole convent. Well, child, remember what I said to thee: next week——

Vio. Aye, and what I am to do this, too. (*Aside.*) I am all obedience, sir; I care not how soon I change my condition.

Ped. Well said, Violante. Well, child, I am going into the country for two or three days, to settle some affairs with thy uncle; and when I return, we'll provide for thy happiness, child—Good bye, Violante; take care of thyself.

[*Exeunt Don Pedro and Violante, L.H.*]

Flora. So, now for the colonel. Hist, hist, colonel.

Re-enter COLONEL BRITON, R.H.

Col. B. Is the coast clear?

Flora. Yes, if you can climb; for you must get over the wash-house, and jump from the garden-wall into the street.

Col. B. Nay, nay, I don't value my neck, if my incognita answers but thy lady's promise.

[*Exeunt Colonel Briton and Flora, R.H.*]

Re-enter FELIX, L.H.D.

Fel. I have lain perdu under the stairs, till I watched the old man out. (*Violante opens the door.*)—Sdeath, I am prevented. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Re-enter VIOLANTE, L.H.D.

Vio. Now to set my prisoner at liberty. (*Goes to the door where the Colonel was hid.*) Sir, sir, you may appear.

Re-enter FELIX, L.H. following her.

Fel. May he so, madam? I had cause for my suspicion, I find. Treacherous woman!

Vio. Ha, Felix here! Nay, then, all's discovered. *(Aside.)*

Fel. *(Draws.)* Villain, whoever thou art, come out, I charge thee, and take the reward of thy adulterous errand.

Vio. What shall I say?—Nothing but the secret which I have sworn to keep, can reconcile this quarrel. *(Aside.)*

Fel. A coward! Nay, then, I'll fetch you out. Think not to hide thyself; no, by St. Anthony, an altar should not protect thee. *[Exit, R.H.D.]*

Vio. Defend me, heaven? What shall I do? I must discover Isabella, or here will be murder. *(Aside.)*

Re-enter FLORA, R.H.S.E.

Flora. I have help'd the colonel off clear, madam. *[Exit, L.H.]*

Vio. Say'st thou so, my girl? Then I am arm'd.

Re-enter FELIX, R.H.D.

Fel. Where has the devil, in compliance to your sex, convey'd him from my resentment?

Vio. Him, whom do you mean? my dear, inquisitive spark? Ha, ha, ha, will you never leave these jealous whims.

Fel. Will you never cease to impose upon me?

Vio. You impose upon yourself, my dear. Do you think I did not see you? Yes, I did, and resolved to put this trick upon you.

Fel. Trick!

Vio. Yes, trick. I knew you'd take the hint, and

soon relapse into your wonted error. How easily your jealousy is fired ! I shall have a blessed life with you.

Fel. Was there nothing in it then, but only to try me ?

Vio. Wont you believe your eyes ?

Fel. My eyes ! no, nor my ears, nor any of my senses, for they have all deceived me. (*Crosses to L.H.*) Well, I am convinced that faith is as necessary in love as in religion ; for the moment a man lets a woman know her conquest, he resigns his senses, and sees nothing but what she'd have him.

Vio. And as soon as that man finds his love returned, she becomes as errant a slave as if she had already said after the priest.

Fel. The priest, Violante, would dissipate those fears which cause these quarrels ; when wilt thou make me happy ?

Vio. To-morrow I will tell thee ; my father is gone for two or three days to my uncle's ; we have time enough to finish our affairs.—But, pr'ythee, leave me now, lest some accident should bring my father.

Fel. To-morrow, then—

Fly swift, ye hours, and bring to morrow on—
But must I leave you now, my Violante ?

Vio. You must, my Felix. We soon shall meet to part no more.

Fel. Oh, rapt'rous sounds ! Charming woman !
Thy words and looks have fill'd my heart
With joy, and left no room for jealousy.
Do thou, like me, each doubt and fear remove,
And all to come be confidence and love.

[*Exeunt, Felix, L.H. Violante, R.H.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Frederic's House.*

Enter FELIX *and* FREDERIC, R.H.

Fel. This hour has been propitious? I am reconciled to Violante, and you assure me Antonio is out of danger.

Fred. Your satisfaction is doubly mine.

Enter LISSARDO, L.H.

Fel. What haste you made, sirrah, to bring me word if Violante went home.

Lis. I can give you very good reasons for my stay, sir.—Yes, sir, she went home.

Fred. Oh! your master knows that, for he has been there himself, Lissardo.

Lis. Sir, may I beg the favour of your ear?

Fel. What have you to say?

(Whispers, and Felix seems uneasy.)

Fred. Ha! Felix changes colour at Lissardo's news.—What can it be?

Fel. A Scotch footman, that belongs to colonel Briton, an acquaintance of Frederic's, say you? The devil!—If she be false, by heaven I'll trace her.

(Whispers Lis. and sends him off, L.H.)

(Aside.) Pr'ythee, Frederic, do you know one colonel Briton, a Scotchman?

Fred. Yes. Why do you ask me?

Fel. Nay, no great matter: but my man tells me that he has had some little differences with a servant of his, that's all.

Fred. He is a good, harmless, innocent fellow; I am sorry for it. The colonel lodges in my house; I knew him formerly in England, and met him here by accident last night, and gave him an invitation home. He is a gentleman of good estate, besides his commission; of excellent principles, and strict honour, I assure you.

Fel. Is he a man of intrigue?

Fred. Like other men, I suppose. Here he comes.

Enter COLONEL BRITON, L.H.

Colonel, I began to think I had lost you.

Col. B. And not without some reason, if you knew all.

Fel. There's no danger of a fine gentleman's being lost in this town, sir.

Col. B. That compliment don't belong to me, sir—but I assure you I have been very near being run away with.

Fred. Who attempted it?

Col. B. Faith, I know not—only that she is a charming woman; I mean as much as I saw of her.

Fel. My heart swells with apprehension. (*Aside.*) Some accidental rencounter?

Fred. A tavern, I suppose, adjusted the matter.

Col. B. A tavern? No, no, sir, she is above that rank, I assure you; this nymph sleeps in a velvet bed, and lodgings every way agreeable.

Fel. How! a velvet bed! (*Aside.*) I thought you said but now, sir, you knew her not.

Col. B. No more I don't, sir.

Fel. How came you then so well acquainted with her bed?

Fred. Aye, aye, come, come, unfold.

Col. B. Why then you must know, gentlemen, that I was conveyed to her lodgings, by one of Cupid's emissaries, called a chambermaid, in a chair, through fifty blind alleys, who, by the help of a key, let me into a garden.

Fel. 'Sdeath, a garden! This must be Violante's garden. (*Aside.*)

Col. B. From thence conducted me into a spacious room, told me her lady would wait on me presently; so, without unveiling, modestly withdrew.

Fel. Damn her modesty! this was Flora. (*Aside.*)

Fred. Well, how then, Colonel?

Col. B. Then, sir, immediately from another door

issued forth a lady, arm'd at both eyes, from whence such showers of darts fell around me, that had I not been cover'd with the shield of another beauty, I had infallibly fallen a martyr to her charms : for, you must know, I just saw her eyes—eyes, did I say ? No, no, hold, I saw but one eye, though I suppose it had a fellow equally as killing.

Fel. But how came you to see her bed, sir ?—
'Sdeath, this expectation gives a thousand racks. (*Aside.*)

Col. B. Why, upon her maid's giving notice her father was coming, she thrust me into the bed-chamber.

Fel. Upon her father's coming ?

Col. B. Aye, so she said ; but putting my ear to the key-hole of the door, I found it was another lover.

Fel. Confound the jilt ! 'Twas she, without dispute.
(*Aside.*)

Fred. Ah, poor colonel ! ha, ha, ha !

Col. B. I discover'd they had had a quarrel, but whether they were reconciled or not, I can't tell ; for the second alarm brought the father in good earnest, and had like to have made the gentleman and I acquainted ; but she found some other stratagem to convey him out.

Fel. Contagion seize her, and make her body ugly as her soul ! There is nothing left to doubt of now—'Tis plain 'twas she. (*Fred. and Col. laugh.*) Sure he knows me, and takes this method to insult me. 'Sdeath, I cannot bear it ! (*Aside.*)

Fred. So when she had dispatch'd her old lover, she paid you a visit in her bed-chamber, ha, colonel ?

Col. B. No, plague take the impertinent puppy, he spoil'd my diversion, I saw her no more.

Fel. Very fine ! Give me patience, heaven, or I shall burst with rage. (*Aside.*)

Fred. That was hard.

Col. B. Nay, what was worse—But, sir, dear sir, do hearken to this. (*To Felix.*) The nymph that introduced me, convey'd me out again over the top of a high wall, where I ran the danger of having my neck broke,

for the father, it seems had locked the door by which I entered.

Fel. That way I miss'd him. Damn her invention. (*Aside.*) Pray, colonel (*Col. and Fel. laugh*)—ha, ha, ha! it's very pleasant, ha, ha!—was this the same lady you met upon the Terriero de Passa this morning?

Col. B. Faith, I can't tell, sir, I had a design to know who that lady was, but my dog of a footman, whom I had ordered to watch her home, fell fast asleep. I gave him a good beating for his neglect, and I have never seen the rascal since.

Fred. Here he comes.

Enter GIBBY, L.H.

Col. B. Where have you been, sirrah?

Gibby. Truth, Ise been seeking ye, and lik yer honour, these twa hoors and mair. I bring thee glad teedings, sir.

Col. B. What, have you found the lady?

Gibby. Geud faith, ha' I sir; and she's, call'd donna Violante, and her parent don Pedro de Mendosa; and, gin ye will gang wi' me, and lik yer honour, Ise make ye ken the hoose right weel.

Fel. Oh, torture, torture! (*Aside.*)

Col. B. Ha! Violante! That's the lady's name of the house where my incognita is: sure it could not be her; at least it was not the same house, I am confident. (*Aside.*)

Fred. Violante! 'Tis false; I would not have you credit him colonel.

Gibby. The deel burst my bladder, sir, gin I lee.

Fel. Sirrah, I say you do lie, and I'll make you eat it, you dog; (*Kicks him.*) and if your master will justify you—

Col. B. Not I, faith, sir. I answer for nobody's lies but my own. If you please, kick him again.

Gibby. But gin he does, Ise na tak it, sir, gin he was a thousand Spaniards. (*Walks about in a passion.*)

Col. B. I owed you a beating, sirrah, and I am oblig-

ed to this gentleman for taking the trouble off my hands ; therefore say no more, d'ye hear, sir ?

(*Apart to Gibby.*)

Gibby. Troth de I, sir, and feel tee.

Fred. This must be a mistake, colonel ; for I know Violante perfectly well, and I am certain she would not meet you upon the Terriero de Passa.

Col. B. Don't be too positive, Frederic. Now I have some reasons to believe it was that very lady

Fel. You'll very much oblige me, sir, if you'd let me know these reasons.

Col. B. Sir !

Fel. Sir, I say I have a right to inquire into these reasons you speak of.

Col. B. Ha, ha ! really, sir, I cannot conceive how you, or any man, can have a right to inquire into my thoughts.

Fel. Sir, I have a right to every thing that relates to Violante.—And he that traduces her fame, and refuses to give his reason for't, is a villain: (*Draws.*)

Col. B. What the devil have I been doing ? Now blisters on my tongue by dozens. (*Aside.*)

Fred. Pr'ythee, Felix, don't quarrel till you know for what : this is all a mistake, I'm positive.

Col. B. Look you, sir, that I dare draw my sword, I think will admit of no dispute.—But though fighting's my trade, I'm not in love with it, and think it more honourable to decline this business than pursue it.—This may be a mistake : however, I'll give you my honour never to have any affair, directly or indirectly, with Violante, provided she is your Violante ; but if there should happen to be another of that name, I hope you will not engross all the Violante's in the kingdom.

Fel. Your vanity has given me sufficient reason to believe I'm not mistaken. I'll not be imposed upon, sir.

Col. B. Nor I be bullied, sir.

Fel. Bullied ! 'Sdeath, such another word, - and I'll nail thee to the wall.

Col. B. Are you sure of that, Spaniard? (*Draws.*)

Gibby. (*Draws.*) Say na mair, mon. O' my saul, here's twa to twa. Dinna fear, sir, Gibby stonds by ye for the honour of Scotland. (*Vapours about.*)

Fred. (*Interposes.*) By St. Anthony, you shan't fight on bare suspicion: be certain of the injury and then—

Fel. That I will this moment; and then, sir—I hope you are to be found—

Col. B. Whenever you please, sir. [*Exit Felix, L.H.*]

Gibby. 'Sdeath, sir, there ne'er was a Scotsman yet that shamed to show his face. (*Struts about.*)

Fred. So, quarrels spring up like mushrooms, in a minute. Violante and he were but just reconciled, and you have furnished him with fresh matter of falling out again; and I am certain, colonel, Gibby is in the wrong.

Gibby. Gin I be, sir, the mon that tald me leed; and gin he did, the deel be my landlord, hell my winter-quarters, and a rape my winding-sheet, gin I dee not liek him as lang as I can haud a stick in my hond, now see ye.

Col. B. I am sorry for what I have said, for the lady's sake: but who could divine that she was his mistress? Pr'ythee who is this warm spark?

Fred. He is the son of one of our grandees, named don Lopez de Pimentell, a very honest gentleman; but something passionate in what relates to his love. He is an only son, which may perhaps be one reason for indulging his passion.

Col. B. When parents have but one child, they either make a madman or a fool of him.

Fred. He is not the only child; he has a sister; but I think, through the severity of his father, who would have married her against her inclination, she has made her escape; and notwithstanding he has offered five hundred pounds, he can get no tidings of her.

Col. B. Ha! how long has she been missing?

Fred. Nay, but since last night, it seems.

Col. B. Last night? The very time! (*Aside.*) How went she?

Fred. Nobody can tell: they conjecture through the window.

Col. B. I'm transported! This must be the lady I caught. (*Aside.*) What sort of a woman is she?

Fred. Middle-sized, a lovely brown, a fine pouting lip, eyes that roll and languish, and seem to speak the exquisite pleasure her arms could give.

Col. B. Oh! I am fired with the description!—'Tis the very she. (*Aside.*) What's her name?

Fred. Isabella.—You are transported, colonel.

Col. B. I have a natural tendency in me to the flesh, thou know'st; and who can hear of charms so exquisite, and yet remain unmoved?—Oh, how I long for the appointed hour! I'll to the Terriero de Passa, and wait my happiness; if she fails to meet me, I'll once more attempt to find her at Violante's, in spite of her brother's jealousy. (*Aside.*) Dear Frederic, I beg your pardon, but I had forgot I was to meet a gentleman upon business at five; I'll endeavour to dispatch him, and wait on you again as soon as possible.

Fred. Your humble servant, colonel [*Exit, R.H.*]

Col. B. Gibby, I have no business with you at present. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Gibby. That's weel. Now will I gang and seek this loon, and gar him gang with me to don Pedro's hoose.—Gin he'll no gang of himself, I'se gar him gang by the lug sir. Godswarbit, Gibby hates a lee.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

SCENE II.—*Violante's Lodgings.*

Enter VIOLANTE and ISABELLA, L.H.

Isa. The hour draws on, Violante, and now my heart begins to fail me; but I resolve to venture, for all that.

Vio. What, does your courage sink, Isabella?

Isa. Only the force of resolution a little retreated; but I'll rally it again, for all that.

Enter FLORA, L.H.

Flora. Don Felix is coming up, madam.

Isa. My brother! which way shall I get out?—Dispatch him as soon as you can, dear Violante.

[Exit into the closet, R.H.]

Vio. I will.

Enter FELIX, in a surly Humour, L.H.

Felix, what brings you back so soon? did I not say to-morrow?

Fel. My passion chokes me; I cannot speak—Oh! I shall burst! *(Aside. Throws himself into a chair.)*

Vio. Bless me, are you not well, my Felix?

Fel. Yes—no—I don't know what I am.

Vio. Hey-day! What's the matter now? Another jealous whim!

Fel. With what an air she carries it?—I sweat at her impudence. *(Aside.)*

Vio. If I were in your place, Felix, I'd choose to stay at home when these fits of spleen are upon me, and not trouble such persons as are not obliged to bear with them. *(Here he affects to be careless of her.)*

Fel. I am very sensible, madam, of what you mean: I disturb you, no doubt; but were I in a better humour, I should not incommode you less; I am but too well convinced you could easily dispense with my visit.

Vio. When you behave yourself as you ought to do, no company so welcome: but when you reserve me for your ill-nature, I waive your merit, and consider what's due to myself.—And I must be so free to tell you, Felix, that these humours of yours will abate, if not absolutely destroy, the very principles of love.

Fel. *(Rises.)* And I must be so free to tell you, madam, that since you have made such ill returns to the respect that I have paid you, all you do shall be indif-

ferent to me for the future; and you shall find me abandon your empire with so little difficulty, that I'll convince the world your chains are not so hard to break, as your vanity would tempt you to believe.—I cannot brook the provocation you give. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Vio. This is not to be borne—Insolent! You abandon! You! Whom I've so often forbade ever to see me more! Have you not fallen at my feet? Implored my favour and forgiveness? Did you not trembling wait, and wish, and sigh, and swear yourself into my heart? Ungrateful man! if my chains are so easily broke, as you pretend, then you are the silliest coxcomb living, you did not break 'em long ago; and I must think him capable of brooking any thing, on whom such usage could make no impression. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Fel. I always believed, madam, my weakness was the greatest addition to your power; you would be less imperious, had my inclination been less forward to oblige you.—You have, indeed, forbade me your sight, but your vanity even then assured you I would return, and I was fool enough to feed that vanity—Your eyes, with all their boasted charms, have acquired the greatest glory in conquering me. And the brightest passage of your life is, wounding this heart with such arms as pierce but few persons of my rank.

(*Walks about in a great passion.*)

Vio. Matchless arrogance! True, sir, I should have kept measures better with you, if the conquest had been worth preserving; but we easily hazard what gives us no pain to lose.—As for my eyes, you are mistaken if you think they have vanquished none but you, there are men above your boasted rank, who have confessed their power, when their misfortune in pleasing you made them obtain such a disgraceful victory.

(*Crosses to L.H.*)

Fel. Yes, madam, I am no stranger to your victories.

Vio. And what you call the brightest passage of my life, is not the least glorious part of yours—

(*Crosses to. R.H.*)

Fel. Ha, ha, don't put yourself in a passion, madam, for I assure you, after this day, I shall give you no trouble.—You may meet your sparks on the Terriero de Passa, at four in the morning, without the least regard to me ; for when I quit your chamber, the world shan't bring me back.

Vio. I am so well pleased with your resolution, I don't care how soon you take your leave.—But what you mean by the Terriero de Passa, at four in the morning, I can't guess.

Fel. No, no, no, not you—You were not upon the Terriero de Passa, at four this morning !

Vio. No, I was not ; but if I was, I hope I may walk where I please, and at what hour I please, without asking your leave.

Fel. Oh, doubtless, madam ! and you might meet colonel Briton there, and afterwards send your emissary to fetch him to your house—and upon your father's coming in, thrust him into your bed-chamber—without asking my leave. 'Tis no business of mine, if you are exposed among all the footmen in town—nay, if they ballad you, and cry you about at a half-penny a piece—they may without my leave. (*Crosses to L.H.*)

Vio. Audacious ! don't provoke me—don't ; my reputation is not to be sported with (*Going up to him*) at this rate—No, sir, it is not. (*Bursts into Tears.*) Inhuman Felix !—Oh, Isabella, what a train of ills thou hast brought on me ! (*Aside.*)

Fel. Ha ! I cannot bear to see her weep—A woman's tears are far more fatal than our swords. (*Aside.*)—Oh, Violante—'Sdeath ! What a dog am I ? Now have I no power to stir.—Dost thou not know such a person as colonel Briton ? Pr'ythee tell me, didst not thou meet him at four this morning upon the Terriero de Passa ?

Vio. Were it not to clear my fame, I would not answer thee, thou black ingrate !—But I cannot bear to be reproached with what I even blush to think of,

much less to act. By heaven, I have not seen the Terriero de Passa this day.

Fel. Did not a Scotch footman attack you in the street neither, Violante?

Vio. Yes; but he mistook me for another, or he was drunk, I know not which.

Fel. And do you not know this Scotch colonel?

Vio. Pray ask me no more questions; this night shall clear my reputation, and leave you without excuse for your base suspicions. More than this I shall not satisfy you, therefore pray leave me.

Fel. Didst thou ever love me, Violante?

Vio. I'll answer nothing.—You were in haste to be gone just now; I should be very well pleased to be alone, sir. (*She sits down, and turns aside.*)

Fel. I shall not long interrupt your contemplation.—Stubborn to the last. (*Aside.*)

Vio. Did ever woman involve herself as I have done? (*Aside.*)

Fel. Now would I give one of my eyes to be friends with her; for something whispers to my soul she is not guilty. (*Aside—He pauses, then pulls a Chair, and sits by her at a little distance, looking at her some time without speaking, then draws a little nearer to her.*) Give me your hand at parting, however, Violante, wont you? (*He lays his hand upon her knee several times.*) Wont you—wont you—wont you?

Vio. (*Half regarding him.*) Wont I do what?

Fel. You know what I would have, Violante. Oh! my heart!

Vio. (*Smiles*) I thought my chains were easily broke. (*Lays her hand in his.*)

Fel. (*Draws his chair close to her, and kisses her hand in a rapture*) Too well thou knowest thy strength—Oh, my charming angel, my heart is all thy own! Forgive my hasty passion, 'tis the transport of a love sincere! Oh! Violante, Violante!

Ped. (*Within, L.H.*) Bid Sancho get a new wheel to the chariot presently.

Vio. Bless me, my father return'd! What shall we do now, Felix? We are ruin'd past redemption.

Fel. No, no, no, my love; I can leap from the closet window. (*Runs to the door where Isabella is, who closes it, and bolts herself in.*) Confusion! somebody bolts the door withinside. I'll see who you have conceal'd here, if I die for't. Oh, Violante, hast thou again sacrificed me to my rival? (*Draws.*)

Vio. By heaven, thou hast no rival in my heart! let that suffice—Nay, sure you will not let my father find you here—Distraction!

Fel. Indeed but I shall, except you command this door to be opened, and that way conceal me from his sight. (*He struggles with her to come at the door.*)

Vio. Hear me, Felix—Though I were sure the refusing what you ask would separate us for ever, by all that's powerful you shall not enter here. Either you do love me, or you do not. Convince me by your obedience.

Fel. That's not the matter in debate—I will know who is in this closet, let the consequence be what it will. Nay, nay, nay, you strive in vain; I will go in.

Vio. You shall not go in.

Enter DON PEDRO, L.H.

Ped. Hey-day! What's here to do? “I will go in,” and “you sha'n't go in”—and “I will go in”—Why, who are you, sir?

Fel. 'Sdeath! What shall I say now? (*Aside.*)

Ped. Don Felix, pray what's your business in my house? Ha, sir.

Vio. Oh, sir! what miracle return'd you home so soon? Some angel 'twas that brought my father back to succour the distress'd. This ruffian, he, I cannot call him gentleman—has committed such an uncommon rudeness, as the most profligate wretch would be

ashamed to own. As I was at my devotions in my closet—

Fel. Devotions!

Vio. I heard a loud knocking at my door, mix'd with a woman's voice, which seemed to imply she was in danger. I flew to the door with the utmost speed, where a lady, veil'd, rush'd in upon me, who, falling on her knees, begged my protection from a gentleman, who, she said, pursued her. I took compassion on her tears, and locked her in this closet; but, in the surprise, having left open the door, this very person whom you see, with his sword drawn, ran in, protesting, if I refused to give her up to his revenge, he'd force the door.

Fel. What, in the name of goodness, does she mean to do? hang me! (*Aside.*)

Vio. I strove with him till I was out of breath, and had you not come as you did, he must have entered—But he's in drink, I suppose, or he could not have been guilty of such an indecorum. (*Signs to Felix.*)

Ped. I'm amazed!

Fel. The devil never fail'd a woman at a pinch:—what a tale has she form'd in a minute—In drink, quotha: a good hint; I'll lay hold on't to bring myself off. (*Aside.*)

Ped. Fie, don Felix! No sooner rid of one broil, but you are commencing another. To assault a lady with a naked sword derogates much from the character of a gentleman, I assure you.

Fel. (*Counterfeits drunkenness.*) Who? I assault a lady! Upon honour the lady assaulted me, sir, and would have siezed this body politic upon the king's highway—Let her come out, and deny it, if she can.—Pray, sir, command the door to be open'd, and let her prove me a liar, if she knows how.

Ped. Aye, aye, who doubts it, sir?—Open the door, Violante, and let the lady come out. Come, I warrant thee he sha'n't hurt her.

Fel. No, no, I wont hurt the dear creature.—Now which way will she come off? (*Aside.*)

Vio. (*Unlocks the door.*) Come forth, madam; none shall dare to touch your veil—I'll convey you out with safety, or lose my life. I hope she understands me. (*Aside.*)

Re-enter Isabella, n.n.d. veiled, who crosses the Stage.

Isa. Excellent girl! [*Exit, L.H.*]

Fel. The devil! a woman! I'll see if she be really so. (*Aside.*)

Vio. Get clear of my father, and follow me to the Terriero de Passa, when all mistakes shall be rectified.

(*Apart to Felix, and Exit, L.H. Felix offers to follow her.*)

Ped. (*Draws his sword.*) Not a step, sir, till the lady be past your recovery; I never suffer the laws of hospitality to be violated in my house, sir,—Come, sir, you and I will take a pipe and bottle together.

Fel. Damn your pipe, and damn your bottle! I hate drinking and smoking—and how will you help yourself, old Whiskers?

Ped. As to smoking or drinking, you have your liberty; but you shall stay, sir.

Fel. But I wont stay; for I don't like your company: besides, I have the best reason in the world for my not staying.

Ped. Aye! What's that?

Fel. Why, I am going to be married; and so good bye.

Ped. To be married! it can't be! Why you are drunk, Felix!

Fel. Drunk! Aye to be sure. You don't think I'd go to be married if I was sober—But drunk or sober, I am going to be married for all that; and if you wont believe me, to convince you, I'll show you the contract, old gentleman.

Ped. Aye, do; come, let's see this contract, then.

Fel. Yes, yes, I'll show you the contract—I'll

show you the contract—Here, sir—here's the contract.
(*Draws a pistol.*)

Ped. (*Starts.*) Well, well, I'm convinc'd; go, go—pray go and be married, sir.

Fel. Yes, yes, I'll go—I'll go and be married; but sha'n't we take a bottle first?

Ped. No, no—pray, dear sir, go and be married.

Fel. Very well, very well; (*Going*) but I insist upon your taking one glass, though.

Ped. No, not now—some other time.—Consider, the lady waits.

Fel. What a cross old fool! First he will, and then he wont; and then he will, and then he wont.

(*Aside, and Exit, L.H.*)

Enter a Servant, L.H.

Serv. Here's don Lopez de Pimentell, to wait on you, seignior.

Ped. What the devil does he want? He is not going to be married, too—Bring him up;

[*Exit Servant, L.H.*]
he's in pursuit of his son, I suppose.

Enter DON LOPEZ, L.H.

Lop. I am glad to find you at home, don Pedro; I was told that you was seen upon the road to—this afternoon.

Ped. That might be, my lord; I had the misfortune to break the wheel of my chariot, which obliged me to return—What is your pleasure with me, my lord?

Lop. I am inform'd that my daughter is in your house.

Ped. That's more than I know, my lord; but here was your son, just now, as drunk as an emperor.

Lop. My son drunk! I never saw him in drink in my life—Where is he, pray, sir?

Ped. Gone to be married.

Lop. Married! To whom? I don't know that he courted any body.

Ped. Nay, I know nothing of that—but I'm sure he show'd me the contract—Within there!

Enter a Servant, L.H.

Bid my daughter come hither; she'll tell you another story, my lord.

Serv. She's gone out in a chair, sir.

Ped. Out in a chair! What do you mean sir?

Serv. As I say, sir; and donna Isabella, went in another, just before her.

Lop. Isabella!

Serv. And don Felix followed in another; I overheard them all bid the chairs go to the Terriero de Passa.

Ped. Ha! what business has my daughter there? I am confounded, and know not what to think—Within there.

Lop. My heart misgives me plaguily—Call me an alguazil, I'll pursue them straight. [*Exeunt, L.H.*]

SCENE III.—*The Street before Don Pedro's House.*

Enter LISSARDO, R.H.

Lis. I wish I could see Flora—Methinks I have an hankering kindness after the slut—We must be reconciled.

Enter GIBBY, R.H.

Gibby. Aw my sol, sir, but Ise blythe to find ye here now

Lis. Ha! brother! give me thy hand, boy.

Gibby. Na se fast, se ye me—Brether, me ne Brethers; I scorn a lee as muckle as a thief, se ye now; and ye must gang intul this house with me, and justify to donna Violante's face, that she was the lady that

gang'd in here this morn, see ye me, or the deel ha my sol, sir, but ye and I shall be twa folks.

Lis. Justify it to donna Violante's face, quotha; for what? sure you don't know what you say.

Gibby. Troth, de I, sir, as weel as ye de; therefore come along, and make no mair words about it.

Lis. Why, what the devil do you mean? Don't you consider you are in Portugal? Is the fellow mad?

Gibby. Fellow! Ise none of yer fellow, sir: and gin the place were hell, I'd gar ye de me justice. (*Lissardo going.*) Nay, the deel a feet ye gang!

(*Lays hold of him, and knocks at the door, L.H.*)

Lis. Ha! don Pedro himself; I wish I were fairly off. (*Aside.*)

Enter DON PEDRO, L.H.

Ped. How now? what makes you knock so loud?

Gibby. Gin this be don Pedro's house, sir, I would speak with donna Violante, his daughter.

Ped. Ha! what is it you want with my daughter, pray?

Gibby. An she be your daughter, an lik yer honour, command her to come out, and answer for herself now, and either justify or disprove what this cheeld told me this morn.

Lis. So, here will be a fine piece of work. (*Aside.*)

Ped. Why, what did he tell you, ha?

Gibby. By my sol, sir, Ise tell you aw the truth; my master got a pratty lady upon the how-de-call't—passa—here, at five this morn, and he gar me watch her heam—And, in truth, I lodg'd her here; and meeting this ill-favour'd thiefe, se ye me, I speered who she was—and he told me her name was donna Violante, don Pedro de Mendoza's daughter.

Ped. Ha! my daughter with a man, abroad at five in the morning. Death, hell, and furies! By St. Anthony, I'm undone.

Gibby. Wounds, sir, ye put yer saint intul bony company.

Ped. Who is your master, you dog you?

Gibby. You dog you! 'Sbleed, sir, don't call names—I wont tell you who my master is, se ye me now.

Ped. And who are you, rascal, that know my daughter so well? Ha! (*To Lissardo, and holding up his cane.*)

Lis. What shall I say to make him give this Scotch dog a good beating? (*Aside.*) I know your daughter, seignior? Not I; I never saw your daughter in all my life.

Gibby. (*Knocks him down with his fist.*) Deel, ha my sol, sar, gin ye get no your carich for that lee now.

Ped. What, hoa! Where are all my servants?

Enter COLONEL BRITON, FELIX, ISABELLA, and Violante, R.H.

Raise the house in pursuit of my daughter.

Col. B. Hey-day! What's here to do?

Gibby. This is the loon-like tik, an lik your honour, that sent mee heam with a lee this morn.

Fel. This is a day of jubilee, Lissardo: no quarrelling with him this day.

Lis. A plague take his fists.—Egad, these Britons are but a word and a blow.

Enter DON LOPEZ, R.H.

Lop. So, have I found you, daughter? Then you have not hang'd yourself yet, I see.

Col. B. But she is married, my lord.

Lop. Married! Zounds, to whom?

Col. B. Even to your humble servant, my lord. If you please to give us your blessing. (*Kneels.*)

Lop. Why, harkye, mistress, are you really married? (*To Isabella.*)

Isa. Really so, my lord.

Lop. And who are you, sir? (*To Colonel Briton.*)

Col. B. An honest North Briton, by birth, and a colonel, by commission, my lord.

Lop. An heretic ! the devil ! (*Holds up his hands.*)

Ped. She has play'd you a slippery trick, indeed, my lord !—Well, my girl, thou hast been to see thy friend married.—Next week thou shalt have a better husband, my dear. (*To Violante.*)

Fel. Next week is a little too soon, sir ; I hope to live longer than that.

Ped. What do you mean, sir ? You have not made a rib of my daughter too, have you ?

Vio. Indeed, but he has, sir, I know not how ; but he took me in an unguarded minute—when my thoughts were not over strong for a nunnery, father.

Lop. Your daughter has play'd you a slippery trick, too, seignior.

Ped. But your son shall never be the better for't, my lord ; her twenty thousand pounds was left on certain conditions, and I'll not part with a shilling.

Lop. But we have a certain thing call'd law, shall make you do justice, sir.

Ped. Well, we'll try that—my lord, much good may it do you with your daughter-in-law.

Lop. I wish you much joy of your rib.

[*Exeunt Pedro, L.H. and Lopez, R.H.*]

Enter FREDERIC, R.H.

Fel. Frederic, welcome !—I sent for thee to be partaker of my happiness ; and pray give me leave to introduce you to the cause of it.

Fred. Your messenger has told me all, and I sincerely share in all your happiness.

Col B. To the right-about, Frederic ; wish thy friend joy.

Fred. I do, with all my soul ; and, madam, I congratulate your deliverance. (*To Isabella.*) Your suspicions are cleared now, I hope, Felix ?

Fel. They are ; and I heartily ask the colonel pardon, and wish him happy with my sister ; for love has taught me to know, that every man's happiness consists in choosing for himself.

Lis. After that rule, I fix here. (*To Flora.*)

Flora. That's your mistake; I prefer my lady's service, and turn you over to her that pleaded right and title to you to-day.

Lis. Choose, proud fool; I sha'n't ask you twice.

Gibby. What say ye now, lass; will ye ge yer hand to poor Gibby? (*To Inis.*)

Inis. That I may not leave my lady—I take you at your word—And though our wooing has been short, I'll, by her example, love you dearly.

Fel. Now, my Violante, I shall proclaim thy virtues to the world.

Let us no more thy sex's conduct blame,
Since thou'rt a proof to their eternal fame,
That man has no advantage but the name. (*Exeunt.*)

Disposition of the Characters when the Curtain falls.



EPILOGUE.

Custom, with all our modern laws combin'd,
Has given such power despotic to mankind,
That we have only so much virtue now,
As they are pleas'd in favour to allow.
Thus, like mechanic work, we're us'd with scorn,
And wound up only for a present turn.
Some are for having our whole sex enslaved,
Affirming we've no souls, and can't be saved.
But were the women all of my opinion,
We'd soon shake off this false usurp'd dominion;
We'd make the tyrant's own, that we could prove
As fit for other business as for love.
Lord! what prerogative might we obtain,
Could we from yielding a few months refrain!
How fondly would our dangling lovers dote!
What homage would be paid to petticoat!
'Twould be a jest to see the change of fate;
How might we all of politics debate;
Promise and swear what we ne'er meant to do,
And, what's still harder, keep our secrets too.
"Ay, marry! keep a secret," says a beau,
And sneers at some ill-nature'd wit below;
But faith, if we should tell but half we know,
There's many a spruce young fellow in this place,
Would never more presume to show his face.
Women are not so weak, whate'er men prate,
How many tip-top beaux have had the fate
T' enjoy from mamma's secrets, their estate!
Who, if her early folly had made known,
Had rid behind the coach that's now their own.
But here the wondrous secret you discover:
A lady ventures for a friend—a lover.
Prodigious! For my part, I frankly own,
I'll spoil the wonder, and the woman shown.

Orberry's Edition.

THE CASTLE SPECTRE,

A DRAMA;

By M. G. Lewis.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY MARKED WITH
THE STAGE BUSINESS, AND STAGE DIRECTIONS,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatres Royal.

LONDON:

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1818.

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Remarks.

The Castle Spectre is nothing more than a romance drawn out into scenes, and may be reckoned amongst the best of its kind; still it is a fiction that could at no time have been real; it wears the colour of no period; the system of fairies, witches, and spectres as a whole is beautiful, but *Lewis*, has here drawn off the grosser part only; there is fancy in his romance, but not that beauty which arises from propriety and proportion. The fact is he imitated the worse parts of German literature; and what is dark and terrible with them becomes too often puerile with him; that he was intimately acquainted with German literature may be proved by many borrowed incidents. For instance in the "Monk;" the whole story of the "Bleeding Nun," is borrowed, and much of the language too from a tale in the *Volksmärchen* (Popular tales, called, if we remember rightly, *Die Entführung*) The Rape,*—the catastrophe of the Monk Ambrosio is almost word for word from a tale in *Fiedr Weber's Sagen der Vorzeit*, Tales of other Times called *Die Teufel's Beschwörung*, the Calling up of the devil.

The language of the present play contrary to *Lewis's* general prose style, which is pure and simple, is heavy and bombastic; there appears to be a perpetual effort after the grand and the terrible, which as constantly degenerates into the bathos and the ridiculous.—The plot has strong interest, but it is the interest of mystery, for it tells a tale that belongs neither to the present nor to any past period. His knights and his fool seem more like modern representatives, dressed up to play a part, than realities, and in truth they play their parts but badly. *Earl Osmond* is an amor-

* This word comes nearest to the German, though not precisely of the same import.—*Entführung*, signifies the forcible abduction, or carrying off a woman.

ous tyrant, who makes love upon the rack and in dungeons. And *Angela* who is said to have all simplicity, is a perfect heroine, brandishing the dagger and speaking pure romance; yet even they are surpassed by the *Father*, who sorrows as no man ever sorrowed, while *Hassan* refines upon refinement, and revenges as no man ever did revenge.

With all these defects Lewis was an accomplished scholar and possessed unbounded fancy; the fatal rock on which his good qualities have been shipwrecked is his deficiency of taste; he had energy, he had humour, he had imagination, and even his errors claim our lenity.

Matthew Gregory Lewis was the son of the Deputy Secretary at War, and was born about the year 1774. While on his travels he wrote his celebrated romance of the "Monk." On the death of his father, he succeeded to a handsome patrimony, part of which consisted in West India property. He resided in the Albany when in London, and lived in rather a retired manner. But the latter years of his life were principally passed in travelling. He had visited the Continent, and twice made the voyage to the West Indies, in returning from whence he died on shipboard about three months ago. In person Mr. Lewis was small and well-formed; his countenance was expressive; his manners gentlemanly; and his conversation agreeable.

As a dramatist his works are as follow:—*Village Virtues*, Dr. F.—*The Minister*, T.—*Castle Spectre*, D.—*Rolla*, T.—*The Twins*, F.—*East Indian*, C.—*Adelmorn*, Rom.—*Alfonso*, T.—*The Captive*, Mono Drama.—*Harper's Daughter*, T.—*Rugantino*, Mel Dr.—*Adelgitha*, T.—*Wood Demon*, Rom. Mel. Dram.—*Venoni*, T.—*One o' Clock*, O.—*Rich and Poor*, O.—The two last pieces he altered from his, "Wood Demon," and "East Indian."

Stage Directions.

By R.H.....	is meant.....	Right Hand.
L.H.		Left Hand.
S.E.		Second Entrance
U.E.		Upper Entrance.
M.D.		Middle Door.
D.F.		Door in Flat.
R.H.D.		Right Hand Door.
L.H.D.		Left Hand Door.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR. WROUGHTON.

FAR from the haunts of men, of vice the foe,
The moon-struck child of genius and of woe,
Versed in each magic spell, and dear to fame,
A fair enchantress dwells, Romance her name.
She loathes the sun, or blazing taper's light :
The moon-beam'd landscape and tempestuous night,
Alone she loves ; and oft, with glimmering lamp,
Near graves new open'd, or 'midst dungeons damp,
Drear forests, ruin'd aisles, and haunted towers,
Forlorn she roves, and raves away the hours !
Anon, when storms howl loud, and lash the deep,
Desperate she climbs the sea-rock's beetling steep ;
There wildly strikes her harp's fantastic strings,
Tells to the moon how grief her bosom wrings ;
And while her strange song chaunts fictitious ills,
In wounded hearts Oblivion's balm distills.

A youth, who yet has liv'd enough to know
That life has thorns, and taste the cup of woe,
As late near Conway's time-bowed towers he stray'd,
Invok'd this bright enthusiast's magic aid.
His prayer was heard. With arms and bosom bare,
Eyes flashing fire, loose robes, and streaming hair,
Her heart all anguish, and her soul all flame,
Swift as her thoughts, the lovely maniac came !
High heav'd her breasts, which struggling passions rent,
As prest to give some fear-draught mystery vent.
And oft, with anxious glance and alter'd face,
Trembling with terror, she relaxed her pace,
And stopt ! and listened !—Then with hurried tread

PROLOGUE.

Onwards again she rush'd, yet backwards bent her head,
As if from murderous swords or following fiends she fled.

Soon as near Conway's walls her footsteps drew,
She bade the youth their ancient state renew :
Eager he sped the fallen towers to rear :
'Twas done, and fancy bore the fabric here.
Next choosing from great Shakspear's comic school,
The gossip erone, gross friar, and gibling fool—
These, with a virgin fair and lover brave,
To our young author's care the enchantress gave ;
But charged him, ere he bless'd the brave and fair,
To lay th' exulting villain's bosom bare,
And by the torments of his conscience show,
That prosperous vice is but triumphant woe !

The pleasing task, congenial to his soul,
Oft from his own sad thoughts our author stole :
Blest be his labours, if with like success
They soothe their sorrows whom I now address.
Beneath this dome, should some afflicted breast
Mourn slighted talents, or desert oppress,
False friendship, hopeless love, or faith betray'd ;
Our author will esteem each toil o'er-paid,
If, while his muse exerts her livelier vein,
Or tells imagin'd woes in plaintive strain,
Her flights and fancies make one smile appear
On the pale cheek, where trickled late a tear ;
Or if *her* fabled sorrows steal one groan,
Which else her hearers would have given their own.

Costume.

OSMOND.

Black velvet old English jacket, trunks and cloak, puffed with scarlet satin, lined with scarlet, trimmed with gold embroidery, and russet boots.—2nd dress. A brocaded morning gown.

PERCY.

A grey cloth tuniek and pantaloons, trimmed with black galloon, russet boots, brown beaver hat, black feather. Second dress—Green old English jacket, cloak and trunks, with orange puffs, trimmed with silver embroidery, a rich breast-plate, black velvet hat, plume of white feathers, buff leather gauntlets, russet boots, lace ruff round the neck.

KENRIC.

A brown old English jacket, cloak and trunks, light blue satin puffs, embroidered with gold, russet boots.

HASSAN, MULEY, SAIB.

Green flies, trimmed with sable fur, white vests and trousers, red slippers, white turbans.

MOTLEY.

Touchstone's dress.

FATHER PHILIP.

A black friars gown, rope beads, russet sandals, flesh coloured stockings.

ALLAN.

A drab colour old English dress, trimmed with black.

HAROLD.

A buff cloth old English dress, trimmed with green braide.

EDRIC.

A fisherman's blue jacket, Gurnsey shirt, petticoat trousers, small round hat, fisherman's boots.

REGINALD.

A dark brown old English tuniek, a dark drab cloth drapery, bound round the waist with cord, flesh legs and arms, russet sandals—the dress very much worn and tattered.

SOLDIERS.

Old English jackets and breeches of scarlet cloth, steel breast plates, spears.

ANGELA.

Spangled muslin dress.

ALICE.

Black open gown, trimmed, point red stuff petticoat, black hood.

SPECTRE.

White muslin dress, large gauze drapery.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

As originally acted.

<i>Osmond</i>	Mr. Barrymore.
<i>Reginald</i>	Mr. Wroughton.
<i>Percy</i>	Mr. Kemble.
<i>Father Philip</i>	Mr. Palmer.
<i>Motley</i>	Mr. Bannister, jun.
<i>Kenrie</i>	Mr. Aickin.
<i>Saib</i>	Mr. Truman.
<i>Hassan</i>	Mr. Dowton.
<i>Muley</i>	Mr. Davis.
<i>Alaric</i>	Mr. Wentworth.
<i>Allan</i>	Mr. Packer.
<i>Edric</i>	Mr. Wathen.
<i>Harold</i>	Mr. Gibbon.
<i>Angela</i>	Mrs. Jordan.
<i>Alice</i>	Mrs. Walcot.
<i>Evelina</i>	Mrs. Powell.

<i>Drury-lane.</i>	<i>Covent-garden.</i>
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<i>Osmond</i>	Mr. Rae.	Mr. Young.
<i>Reginald</i>	Mr. Pope.	Mr. Murray.
<i>Percy</i>	Mr. Barnard.	Mr. Abbott.
<i>Father Philip</i>	Mr. Gattie.	Mr. Egerton.
<i>Motley</i>	Mr. Harley.	Mr. Blanchard.
<i>Kenrie</i>	Mr. Carr.	Mr. Claremont.
<i>Saib</i>	Mr. Coveney.	Mr. Treby.
<i>Hassan</i>	Mr. Penley.	Mr. Slader.
<i>Muley</i>	Mr. Smith.	Mr. Jefferies.
<i>Alaric</i>	Mr. Evans.	Mr. Louis.
<i>Allan</i>	Mr. Maddocks.	
<i>Edric</i>	Mr. Minton.	Mr. Atkins.
<i>Harold</i>	Mr. Buxton.	
<i>Angela</i>	Mrs. Robinson.	Miss Bristow.
<i>Alice</i>	Mrs. Sparks.	Mrs. Kennedy.
<i>Evelina</i>	Mrs. Knight.	Mrs. Powell.

The time this piece takes in representation is two hours and fifty minutes.—The first act occupies the space of thirty minutes—the second, thirty-five—the third, thirty-six—the fourth, thirty-four—and the fifth, thirty-five—The half price commences, generally, at ten minutes before nine o'clock.

THE CASTLE SPECTRE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Grove.*

Enter FATHER PHILIP and MOTLEY, through Gate,
R.H.

F. Phil. Never tell me!—I repeat it, you are a fellow of a very scandalous course of life! But what principally offends me is, that you pervert the minds of the maids, and keep kissing and smuggling all the pretty girls you meet. Oh! fye! fye!

(Crosses to R.H.)

Mot. I kiss and smuggle them? St. Francis forbid! Lord love you, father, 'tis they who kiss and smuggle me. I protest I do what I can to preserve my modesty; and I wish that archbishop Dunstan had heard the lecture upon chastity which I read last night to the dairy-maid in the dark! he'd have been quite edified. But yet what does talking signify? The eloquence of my lips is counteracted by the lustre of my eyes; and really the little devils are so tender, and so troublesome, that I'm half angry with nature for having made me so very bewitching.

F. Phil. Nonsense! nonsense!

Mot. Put yourself in my place:—suppose that a sweet, smiling rogue, just sixteen, with rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, pouting lips, &c.—

F. Phil. Oh, fye! fye! fye!—To hear such licentious discourse brings the tears into my eyes!

Mot. I believe you, father; for I see the water is running over at your mouth; which puts me in mind, my good father, that there are some little points which might be altered in you still better than in myself: such as intemperance, gluttony—

F. Phil. Gluttony! Oh! abominable falsehood!

Mot. Plain matter of fact!—Why, will any man pretend to say that you came honestly by that enormous belly, that tremendous tomb of fish, flesh, and fowl? and, for incontinence, you must allow yourself, that you are unequalled.

F. Phil. I!—I!—

Mot. You! you!—May I ask what was your business in the beech grove the other evening, when I caught you with buxom Margery, the miller's pretty wife? Was it quite necessary to lay your heads together so close?

F. Phil. Perfectly necessary: I was whispering in her ear wholesome advice, and she took it as kindly as I gave it.

Mot. So you was, faith, father; you gave it with your lips, and she took it with hers—Well done, father Philip!

F. Phil. Son, son, you give your tongue too great a license.

Mot. Nay, father, be not angry: fools, you know, are privileged persons.

F. Phil. I know they are very useless ones; and, in short, master Motley, to be plain with you, of all fools I think you the worst; and for fools of all kinds I've an insuperable aversion.

Mot. Really? Then you have one good quality at least, and I cannot but admire such a total want of self-love! (*Bell rings, R.H.*) But, hark! there goes

the dinner-bell—away to table, father—Depend upon't the servants will rather eat *part* of their dinner un-blessed, than stay till your stomach comes like Jonas's whale, and swallows up the whole.

F. Phil. Well, well, fool; I am going; but first let me explain to you that my bulk proceeds from no indulgence of voracious appetite. No, son, no—little sustenance do I take; but St. Cuthbert's blessing is upon me, and that little prospers with me most marvellously. Verily, the saint has given me rather too plentiful an increase, and my legs are scarce able to support the weight of his bounties. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Mot. He looks like an overgrown turtle, waddling upon its hind fins! Yet, at bottom, 'tis a good fellow enough, warm-hearted, benevolent, friendly, and sincere; but no more intended by nature to be a monk, than I to be a maid of honour to the queen of Sheba.
(*Going, R.H.*)

Enter PERCY, L.H.

Per. I cannot be mistaken—In spite of his dress, his features are too well known to me! Hist! Gilbert! Gilbert!

Mot. Gilbert? Oh Lord, that's I!—Who calls?

Per. Have you forgotten me?

Mot. Truly, sir, that would be no easy matter; I never forgot in my life what I never knew.

Per. Have ten years altered me so much that you cannot——

Mot. Hey!——can it be——Pardon me, my dear lord Percy.—In truth, you may well forgive my having forgotten *your* name, for at first I didn't very well remember my own. However, to prevent further mistakes, I must inform you that he who in your father's service was Gilbert the knave, is Motley the fool in the service of Earl Osmond.

Per. Of earl Osmond?—this is fortunate. Gilbert, you may be of use to me; and if the attachment

which as a boy you professed for me still exists——

Mot. It does with ardour unabated, for I'm not so unjust as to attribute to you my expulsion from Alnwie castle: but now, sir, may I ask, what brings you to Wales?

Per. A woman whom I adore.

Mot. Yes, I guessed that the business was about a petticoat. And this woman is——

Per. The orphan ward of a villager, without friends, without family, without fortune!

Mot. Great points in her favour, I must confess. And which of these excellent qualities won your heart?

Per. I hope I had better reasons for bestowing it on her. No, Gilbert; I loved her for a person beautiful without art, and graceful without affectation—for a heart tender without weakness, and noble without pride. I saw her at once beloved and revered by her village companions; they looked on her as a being of a superior order: and I felt, that she who gave such dignity to the cottage maid, must needs add new lustre to the coronet of the Percies.

Mot. From which I am to understand that you mean to marry this rustic?

Per. Could I mean otherwise I should blush for myself.

Mot. Yet surely the baseness of her origin——

Per. Can to me be no objection: in giving her my hand I raise her to my station, not debase myself to hers; nor ever, while gazing on the beauty of a rose, did I think it less fair because planted by a peasant.

Mot. Bravo!—And what says your good grumbling father to this?

Per. Alas! he has long slept in the grave.

Mot. Then he's quiet at last! Well, heaven, grant him that peace above which he suffered nobody to enjoy below, but what obstacle now prevents your marriage?

Per. You shall hear.—Fearful lest my rank should influence this lovely girl's affections, and induce her to

bestow her hand on the noble, while she refused her heart to the man, I assumed a peasant's habit, and presented myself as Edwy the low-born and the poor. In this character I gained her heart, and resolved to hail, as countess of Northumberland, the betrothed of Edwy the low-born and the poor! Judge, then, how great must have been my disappointment, when, on entering her guardian's cottage with this design, he informed me, that the unknown, who sixteen years before had confided her to his care, had reclaimed her on that very morning, and conveyed her no one knew whither.

Mot. That was unlucky.

Per. However, in spite of his precautions, I have traced the stranger's course, and find him to be Kenrie, a dependant upon earl Osmond.

Mot. Surely 'tis not lady Angela, who——

Per. The very same! Speak, my good fellow! do you know her?

Mot. Not by your description; for here she's understood to be the daughter of sir Malcolm Mowbray, my master's deceased friend. And what is your present intention?

Per. To demand her of the earl in marriage.

Mot. Oh! that will never do: for, in the first place, you'll not be able to get a sight at him. I've now lived with him five long years, and till Angela's arrival, never witnessed a guest in the castle.—Oh! 'tis the most melancholy mansion! And as to the earl, he's the very antidote to mirth: none dare approach him, except Kenrie and his four blacks—all others are ordered to avoid him; and whenever he quits his room, ding! dong! goes a great bell, and away run the servants like so many scared rabbits.

Per. Strange!—and *what* reasons can he have for——

Mot. Oh! reasons in plenty. You must know there's an ugly story respecting the last owners of this castle. Osmond's brother, his wife, and infant child, were murdered by banditti, as it was said: unluckily the

only servant who escaped the slaughter deposed, that he recognised among the assassins a black still in the service of earl Osmond. The truth of this assertion was never known, for the servant was found dead in his bed the next morning.

Per. Good heavens!

Mot. Since that time no sound of joy has been heard in Conway-castle. Osmond instantly became gloomy and ferocious; he now never utters a sound except a sigh, has broken every tie of society, and keeps his gates barred unceasingly against the stranger.

Per. Yet Angela is admitted—But no doubt affection for her father——

Mot. Why, no; I rather think that affection for her father's child——

Per. How?

Mot. If I've any knowledge in love, the earl feels it for his fair ward; but the lady will tell you more of this, if I can procure for you an interview

Per. The very request which——

Mot. 'Tis no easy matter, I promise you; but I'll do my best. In the meanwhile wait for me in yonder fishing hut—its owner's name is Edric;—tell him that I sent you, and he will give you a retreat.

Per. Farewell, then, and remember that whatever reward——

Mot. Dear master, to mention a reward insults me. You have already shown me kindness; and when 'tis in my power to be of use to you, to need the inducement of a second favour would prove me a scoundrel undeserving of the first. [Exit, R.H.]

Per. How warm is this good fellow's attachment! Yet our barons complain that the great can have no friends! If they have none, let their own pride bear the blame. Instead of looking with scorn on those whom a smile would attract, and a favour bind for ever, how many firm friends might our nobles gain, if they would but reflect that their vassals are men as they are, and have hearts whose feelings can be grateful as their own. [Exit, L.H.]

SCENE II.—*The Castle-Hall.*

Enter SAIB, L.H., and HASSAN, R.H.

Saib. Now, Hassan, what success?

Has. My search has been fruitless? In vain have I paced the river's banks, and pierced the grove's deepest recesses. Nor glen nor thicket have I passed unexplored, yet found no stranger to whom Kenric's description could apply.

Saib. Saw you no one?

Has. A troop of horsemen passed me as I left the wood.

Saib. Horsemen, say you?—Then Kenric may be right. Earl Percy has discovered Angela's abode, and lurks near the castle, in hopes of carrying her off.

Has. His hopes then will be vain. Osmond's vigilance will not easily be eluded—sharpened by those powerful motives, love and fear.

Saib. His love, I know; but should he lose Angela, what has he to fear?

Has. If Percy gains her, every thing! Supported by such wealth and power, dangerous would be her claim to these domains, should her birth be discovered. Of this our lord is aware; nor did he sooner hear that Northumberland loved her, than he hastened to remove her from Allan's care. At first I doubt his purpose was a foul one: her resemblance to her mother induced him to change it. He now is resolved to make her his bride, and restore to her those rights of which himself deprived her.

Saib. Think you the lady perceives that our master loves her?

Has. I know she does not. Absorbed in her own passion for Percy, on Osmond's she bestows no thought, and, while roving through these pompous halls and chambers, sighs for the Cheviot-hills, and Allan's humble cottage.

Saib. But as she still believes Percy to be a low-

born swain, when Osmond lays his coronet at her feet, will she reject his rank and splendour?

Has. If she loves well, she will. Saib, I too have loved! I have known how painful it was to leave her on whom my heart hung; how incapable was all else to supply her loss! I have exchanged want for plenty, fatigue for rest, a wretched hut for a splendid palace. But am I happier? O no! Still do I regret my native land, and the partners of my poverty. Then toil was sweet to me, for I laboured for Samba! then repose ever blessed my bed of leaves, for there by my side lay Samba sleeping.

Saib. This from you, Hassan?—Did love ever find a place in your flinty bosom?

Has. Did it? Oh Saib! my heart once was gentle, once was good! But sorrows have broken it, insults have made it hard! I have been dragged from my native land, from a wife who was every thing to me, to whom I was every thing! Twenty years have elapsed since these christians tore me away; they trampled upon my heart, mocked my despair, and, when in frantic terms I raved of Samba, laughed, and wondered how a negro's soul could feel! (*Crosses to L.H.*) In that moment, when the last point of Africa faded from my view, when as I stood on the vessel's deck I felt that all I loved was to me lost for ever, in that bitter moment did I banish humanity from my breast. I tore from my arm the bracelet of Samba's hair; I gave to the sea the precious token, and while the high waves swift bore it from me, vowed aloud endless hatred to mankind. I have kept my oath, I *will* keep it!

(*Crosses to R.H.*)

Saib. Ill starred Hassan! your wrongs have indeed been great.

Has. To remember them unmans me.—Farewell! I must to Kenrie. Hold!—Look, where he comes from Osmond's chamber!

Saib. And seemingly in wrath.

Has. His conferences with the earl of late have had no other end. The period of his favour is arrived.

Saib. Not of his favour merely, Hassan.

Has. How? Mean you that——

Saib. Silence! He's here! you shall know more anon.

Enter KENRIC, R.H.

Ken. Ungrateful Osmond, I will bear your ingratitude no longer.—Now, Hassan, found you the man described?

Has. Nor any that resembled him.

Ken. Yet, that I saw Percy, I am convinced. As I crossed him in the wood, his eye met mine. He started as had he seen a basilisk, and fled with rapidity. But I will submit no longer to this painful dependence. To-morrow, for the last time, will I summon him to perform his promise: if he refuses, I will bid him farewell for ever, and, by my absence, free him from a restraint equally irksome to myself and him.

Saib. Will you so, Kenric?—Be speedy then, or you will be too late.

Ken. Too late! And wherefore?

Saib. You will soon receive the reward of your services.

Ken. Ha! Know you what that reward will be?

Saib. I guess, but may not tell.

Ken. Is it a secret?

Saib. Can you keep one?

Ken. Faithfully!

Saib. As faithfully can I. Come, Hassan.

[*Exeunt* R.H.]

Ken. What meant the slave? Those doubtful expressions—Ha! should the earl intend me false—Kenric! Kenric! how is thy nature changed! There was a time when fear was a stranger to my bosom—when, guiltless myself, I dreaded not art in others. Now, where'er I turn me, danger appears to lurk; and I suspect treachery in every breast, because my own heart hides it.

[*Exit* L.H.]

Enter Father PHILIP, followed by ALICE, R.H.

F. Phil. Nonsense!—You silly woman, what you say is not possible.

Alice. I never said it was possible. I only said it was true; and that if ever I heard music, I heard it last night.

F. Phil. Perhaps the fool was singing to the servants.

Alice. The fool indeed? Oh! fye! fye! How dare you call my lady's ghost a fool?

F. Phil. Your lady's ghost!—You silly old woman!

Alice. Yes, father, yes: I repeat it, I heard the guitar lying upon the oratory table play the very air which the lady Evelina used to sing while rocking her little daughter's cradle. She warbled it so sweetly, and ever at the close it went (*singing*)

“Lullaby! Lullaby! hush thee, my dear!
Thy father is coming, and soon will be here!”

F. Phil. Nonsense! Nonsense!—Why, pr'ythee, Alice, do you think that your lady's ghost would get up at night only to sing Lullaby for your amusement?—Besides, how should a spirit, which is nothing but air, play upon an instrument of material wood and cat-gut?

Alice. How can I tell?—Why, I know very well that men are made; but if you desired me to make a man, I vow and protest I should't know how to set about it. I can only say, that last night I heard the ghost of my murdered lady——

F. Phil. Playing upon the spirit of a cracked guitar! Alice! Alice! these fears are ridiculous! The idea of ghosts is a vulgar prejudice; and they who are timid and absurd enough to encourage it, prove themselves the most contemptible——

Alice. (*Screaming.*) Oh! Lord bless us!

F. Phil. What?—Hey!—Oh! dear!

Alice. Look! look!—A figure in white!—It comes from the haunted room!

F. Phil. (*Dropping on his knees.*) Blessed St. Patrick!—Who has got my beads? Where's my prayer-book?—It comes!—it comes!—Now! now!—Lack-a-day, it's only lady Angela! (*Rising.*) Lack-a-day! I'm glad of it with all my heart!

Alice Truly so am I.—But what say you now, father, to the fear of spectres?

F. Phil. Why, the next time you are afraid of a ghost, remember and make use of the receipt which I shall now give you; and instead of calling for a priest to lay the spirits of other people in the red-sea, call for a bottle of red wine to raise your own. Probatum est. [*Exit L.H.*]

Alice. Wine indeed!—I believe he thinks I like drinking as well as himself. No, no! Let the old toping friar take his bottle of wine; I shall confine myself to plain cherry-brandy.

Enter ANGELA, R.H.

Ang. I am weary of wandering from room to room; in vain do I change the scene, discontent is every where. There was a time when music could delight my ear, and nature could charm my eye:—when I could pour forth a prayer of gratitude, and thank my good angels for a day unclouded by sorrow!—Now all is gone, all lost, all faded! (*Aside.*)

Alice. Lady!

Ang. Perhaps at this moment he thinks upon me! Perhaps then he sighs, and murmurs to himself, “The flowers, the rivulets, the birds, every object reminds me of my well-beloved; but what shall remind her of Edwy?”—Oh! that will my heart, Edwy; I need no other remembrancer! (*Aside.*)

Alice. Lady! lady Angela!—She minds me no more than a post!

Ang. Oh! are you there, good Alice? What would you with me?

Alice. Only ask how your ladyship rested?

Ang. Ill! very ill!

Alice. Lack-a-day! and yet you sleep in the best bed!

Ang. True, good Alice; but my heart's anguish strewed thorns upon my couch of down.

Alice. Marry, I'm not surpris'd that you rested ill in the cedar-room. Those noises so near you——

Ang. What noises? I heard none.

Alice. How?—When the clock struck one, heard you no music?

Ang. Music!—None.—Not that I——Stay! now I remember that while I sat alone in my chamber this morning——

Alice. Well, lady, well!

Ang. Methought I heard some one singing; it seemed as if the words run thus—(*singing*) “Lullaby! Lullaby! Hush thee, my dear!”

Alice. (*Screaming.*) The very words!—It was the ghost, lady! it was the ghost!

Ang. The ghost, Alice!—I protest I thought it had been you.

Alice. Me, lady!—Lord, when did you hear this singing?

Ang. Not five minutes ago, while you were talking with father Philip.

Alice. The Lord be thanked!—Then it was not the ghost. It was I, lady! It was I!—And have you heard no other singing since you came to the castle?

Ang. None. But why that question?

Alice. Because lady——But perhaps you may be frightened?

Ang. No, no!—Proceed, I entreat you!

Alice. Why, then, they do say, that the chamber in which you sleep is haunted. You may have observed two folding doors, which are ever kept locked: they lead to the oratory, in which the lady Evelina passed most of her time, while my lord was engaged in the Scottish wars. She would sit there, good soul! hour after hour, playing on the lute, and singing airs so

sweet, so sad, that many a time and oft have I wept to hear her. Ah! when I kissed her hand at the castle-gate, little did I suspect that her fate would have been so wretched!

Ang. And what was her fate?

Alice. A sad one, lady! Impatient to embrace her lord, after a year's absence, the countess set out to meet him on his return from Scotland, accompanied by a few domestics and her infant daughter, then scarce a twelvemonth old. But, as she returned with her husband, robbers surprised the party scarce a mile from the castle; and since that time no news has been received of the earl, of the countess, the servants, or the child.

Ang. Dreadful! Were not their corses found?

Alice. Never! The only domestic who escaped pointed out the scene of action; and as it proved to be on the river's banks, doubtless the assassins plunged the bodies into the stream.

Ang. Strange! And did earl Osmond then become owner of this castle?—*Alice!* was he ever suspected of—

Alice. Speak lower, lady! It was said so, I own: but for my own part I never believed it. To my certain knowledge Osmond loved the lady Evelina too well to hurt her; and when he heard of her death, he wept, and sobbed as if his heart were breaking. Nay, 'tis certain that he proposed to her before marriage, and would have made her his wife, only that she liked his brother better. But I hope you're not alarmed by what I mentioned of the cedar-room?

Ang. No, truly, *Alice*; from good spirits I have nothing to fear, and heaven and my innocence will protect me against bad. (*Crosses to L.H.*)

Alice. My very sentiments, I protest! But heaven forgive me; while I stand gossiping here I warrant all goes wrong in the kitchen! Your pardon, lady: I must away! I must away! [*Exit R.H.*]

Ang. (*Musing.*) Osmond was his brother's heir.

His strange demeanour!—Yes, in that gloomy brow is written a volume of villainy!—Heavenly powers! an assassin then is master of my fate!—An assassin too who—I dare not bend my thoughts that way!—Oh! would I had never entered these castle walls!—had never exchanged for fearful pomp the security of my pleasures—the tranquillity of my soul! *[Exit L.H.]*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Armoury.*—*Suits of Armour are arranged on both sides upon Pedestals, with the Names of their Possessors written under each.*

Enter MOTLEY, *peeping in L.H.*

The coast is clear!—Hist! Hist!—You may enter.

Enter PERCY, *L.H.*

Per. Loiter not here.—Quick, my good fellow!—Conduct me to Angela!

Mot. Softly, softly! A little caution is needful; and I promise you just now I'm not upon roses.

Per. If such are your fears, why not lead me at once to Angela.

Mot. Be contented, and leave all to me: I will contrive matters so that Osmond shall have you before his eyes, and be no jot the wiser—but you must make up your mind to play a statue for an hour or two.

Per. How?

Mot. Nay, 'tis absolutely necessary—the late earl's servants are fully persuaded that his ghost wanders every night through the long galleries, and parades the old towers and dreary halls which abound in this melan-

choly mansion. He is supposed to be drest in complete armour; and that which you are to wear at present was formerly his. Now hear my plan. The earl prepares to hold a conference with lady Angela; here placed upon this pedestal you may listen to their discourse unobserved, and thus form a proper judgment both of your mistress and her guardian. As soon as it grows dark I will conduct you to Angela's apartments: and even should you be observed, you will pass for earl Reginald's spectre.

Per. I do not dislike your plan: but tell me, Gilbert, do you believe this tale of the apparition.

Mot. Oh! Heaven forbid! Not a word of it. Had I minded all the strange things related of this castle, I should have died of fright in the first half hour.—Why, they say, that earl Hubert rides every night round the castle on a white horse; that the ghost of lady Bertha haunts the west pinnacle of the chapel-tower; and that lord Hildebrand, who was condemned for treason some sixty years ago, may be seen in the great-hall, regularly at midnight, walking about without his head. Above all, they say that the spirit of the late countess sits nightly in her oratory, and sings her baby to sleep. Quick, quick, ere the servants quit the hall, where they are now at dinner—(*takes down a suit of armour.*) Here's the helmet—the gauntlets—the shield.—So now, take the truncheon in your hand, and there we have you armed cap-a-pee.—(*Bell sounds thrice.*)—Hark tis the earl; quick, to your post.—(*Percy ascends the pedestal.*) Farewell—I must get out of his way, but as soon as he quits this chamber, I'll rejoin you. [*Exit, r.u.*]

(*The folding-doors are thrown open: Saib, Hassan, Muley, and Aluric enter, preceding earl Osmond, who walks with his arms folded, and his eyes bent upon the ground. Saib advances a sofa to which, after making a few turns through the room, Osmond throws himself. He motions to his attendants, and they withdraw. He appears lost in thought; then*

suddenly rises, and again traverses the room with disordered steps.)

Osm. I will not sacrifice my happiness to hers ! No, Angela, you ask of me too much. Since the moment when I pierced her heart, deprived of whom life became odious ; since my soul was stained with his blood who loved me, with hers whom I loved, no form has been grateful to my eye, no voice spoken pleasure to my soul, save Angela's, save only Angela's !—Mine she is, mine she shall be, though Reginald's bleeding ghost flit before me, and thunder in my ear—"Hold ! Hold !"—Peace, stormy heart ! She comes !

Enter ANGELA, R.H.

Osm. (*In a softened voice.*) Come hither, Angela. Wherefore so sad ? That downcast eye, that listless air, neither suit your age or fortunes. The treasures of India are lavished to adorn your person ; yet still do I see you, forgetting what you are, look back with regret to what you were !

Ang. Oh ! my good lord, esteem me not ungrateful ! I acknowledge your bounties, but they have not made me happy. I still linger in thought near those scenes where I passed the blessed period of infancy ; I still thirst for those simple pleasures which habit has made so dear. The birds which my own hands reared, and the flowers which my own hands planted ; the banks on which I rested when fatigued, all have acquired rights to my memory and my love !

Osm. Absurd !

Ang. While I saw you, Cheviot Hills, I was happy, oh ! how happy ! At morn when I left my bed, light were my spirits, and gay as the zephyrs of summer ; and when at night my head again pressed my pillow, I whispered to myself, "happy has been to-day, and to-morrow will be as happy !" Then sweet was my sleep ; and my dreams were of those whom I loved dearest.

Osm. Romantic enthusiast! These thoughts did well for the village maid, but disgrace the daughter of Sir Malcolm Mowbray: hear me, Angela; an English baron loves you, a nobleman than whom our island boasts few more potent. 'Tis to him that your hand is destined, 'tis on him that your heart must be bestowed.

Ang. I cannot dispose of that which has long been another's—My heart is Edwy's.

Osm. Edwy's? A peasant's?

Ang. For the obscurity of his birth chance must be blamed; the merit of his virtues belongs wholly to himself.

Osm. By Heaven you seem to think that poverty is a virtue!

Ang. Sir I think 'tis a misfortune, not a crime: Edwy has my plighted faith: He received it on the last evening which I passed in Northumberland. It was then that for the first time I gave him my hand, and I swore that I never would give it but to him! It was then that for the first time he pressed his lips to mine, and I swore that my lips should never be pressed by another!

Osm. Girl! girl! you drive me to distraction!

Ang. You alarm me, my Lord! Permit me to retire.—(*Going, Osmond detains her violently by the arm.*)

Osm. Stay!—(*In softer tone.*) Angela! I love you

Ang. (*Starting.*) My lord!

Osm. (*Passionately.*) Love you to madness!—Nay strive not to escape: remain, and hear me! I offer you my hand: if you accept it, mistress of these fair and rich domains, your days shall glide away in happiness and honour; but if you refuse and scorn my offer, force shall this instant—

Ang. Force? Oh! No!—You dare not be so base!

Osm. Reflect on your situation, Angela; you are in my power—remember it, and be wise!

Ang. If you have a generous mind, that will be my

surest safeguard. Be it my plea, Osmond, when thus I sue to you for mercy, for protection! look on me with pity, Osmond! 'Tis the daughter of the man you loved, 'tis a creature, friendless, wretched, and forlorn, who kneels before you, who flies to you for refuge!—True, I am in your power: then save me, respect me, treat me not cruelly; for—I am in your power!

Osm. I will hear no more. Will you accept my offer?

Ang. Osmond, I conjure you—

Osm. Answer my question!

Ang. Mercy! Mercy!

Osm. Will you be mine?—Speak! Speak!

Ang. (*After a moment's pause, rises, and pronounces with firmness.*) Never, so help me heaven!

Osm. (*Seizing her.*) Your fate then is decided! (*Angela shrieks.*)

Per.—(*In a hollow voice.*)—Hold!

Osm. (*Starts, but still grasps Angela's arm.*)—Ha! what was that?

Ang. (*Struggling to escape.*) Hark! hark!—Heard you not a voice?

Osm. (*Gazing upon Percy.*) It came from hence!—From Reginald!—Was it not a delusion?—Did indeed his spirit—(*Relapsing into his former passion.*) Well be it so! though his ghost should rush between us, thus would I clasp her—horror! What sight is this!—(*At the moment that he again seizes Angela, Percy extends his truncheon with a menacing gesture, and descends from the pedestal. Osmond releases Angela, who immediately rushes from the chamber, R.H.D. while Percy advances a few steps, and remains gazing on the earl steadfastly.*)—I know that shield!—that helmet!—Speak to me, dreadful vision!—Tax me with my crimes!—Tell me, that you come—Stay! Speak!—(*Following Percy, who, when he reaches the door, through which Angela escaped, turns, and signs to him with his hand. Osmond starts back in terror.*)—He forbids my following!—

He leaves me !—The door closes—(*in a sudden burst of passion, and drawing his sword*)—Hell, and fiends ! I'll follow him, though lightnings blast me ! —(*He rushes distractedly from the chamber, R.H.D.*)

SCENE II.—*The Castle-hall.*

Enter ALICE, R.H.

Alice. Here's rudeness ! here's ill-breeding ! On my conscience, this house grows worse and worse every day !

Enter MOTLEY, L.H.

Mot. What can earl Percy have done with himself ? How now, dame Alice, you look angry.

Alice. By my troth, fool, I've little reason to look pleased. To be frightened out of my wits by night, and thumped and bumped about by day, is not likely to put one in the best humour.

Mot. Poor soul ! And who has been thumping and bumping you ?

Alice. Who has ? You should rather ask who has not.—Why only hear :—as I was just now going along the narrow passage which leads to the armoury—singing to myself, and thinking of nothing, I met lady Angela flying away as if for dear life !—so I dropped her a curtsy—but might as well have spared my pains. Without minding me any more than if I had been a dog or a cat—she pushed me on one side ; and before I could recover my balance, somebody else, who came bouncing by me, gave me t'other thump—and there I lay sprawling upon the floor. However, I tumbled with all possible decency.

Mot. Somebody else ! What somebody else ?

Alice. I know not—but he seemed to be in armour.

Mot. In armour ? Pray, Alice, looked he like a ghost ?

Alice. What he looked like, I cannot say ;—but

I'm sure he didn't feel like one : however, you've not heard the worst. While I was sprawling upon the ground, my lord comes tearing along the passage—the first thing he did was to stumble against me—away went his heels—over he came—and in the twinkling of an eye there lay his lordship ! As soon as he got up again—Mercy ! how he stormed !—He snatched me up—called me an ugly old witch—shook the breath out of my body—then clapped me on the ground again, and bounced away after the other two !

Mot. My mind misgives me !—But what can this mean, Alice ?

Alice. The meaning I neither know, or care about ;—but this I know—I'll stay no longer in a house where I'm treated so disrespectfully. “ My lady ! ”—says I—“ Out of my way ! ”—says she, and pushes me on one side.—“ My lord,”—says I—“ You be damned ”—says he, and pushes me on t'other !—I protest I never was so ill used, even when I was a young woman !

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Mot. Should earl Percy be discovered—the very thought gives me a creak in my neck !—At any rate I had better enquire whether—(*Going, R.H.*)

Enter FATHER PHILIP hastily, R.H.

F. Phil. (Stopping him.) Get out of the house !—That's your way !

Mot. Why, what's the meaning—

F. Phil. Don't stand prating here, but do as I bid you !

Mot. But first tell me—

F. Phil. I can only tell you to get out of the house. Kenric has discovered earl Percy—You are known to have introduced him—the Africans are in search of you—If you are found, you will be hung out of hand. Fly then to Edric's cottage—hide yourself there !—Hark !—Some one comes ! Away, away, ere it is too late !—(*Pushing him out.*)

Mot. (Confused.) But earl Percy—but Angela—

F. Phil. Leave them to me ! You shall hear from me soon. Only take care of yourself, and fly with all diligence !—Away ! *[Exit Motley, L.H.]*

F. Phil. So, so, he's off, and now I've time to take breath. I've not moved so nimbly for the last twenty years ; and, in truth, I'm at present but ill calculated for velocity of motion. However, my exertions have not been thrown away : I've saved this poor knave from Osmond's vengeance—and should my plan for the lady's release succeed—poor little soul !—To see how she took on, when Percy was torn from her ! Well, well, she shall be rescued from her tyrant. The moveable pannels—the subterraneous passages—the secret springs well-known to me—Oh ! I cannot fail of success : but in order to secure it, I'll finally arrange my ideas in the buttery. Whenever I've any great design in hand, I always ask advice of a flaggon of ale, and mature my plan over a cold venison-pasty. *[Exit, R.H.]*

SCENE III.—*A spacious Chamber ; on one side is a Couch ; the other a Table, which is placed under an arched and lofty Window.*

Enter OSMOND, R.H.D. followed by SAIB, HASSAN, MULEY, and ALARIC, who conduct PERCY disarmed.

Osm. This, sir, is your prison ; but, doubtless, your confinement will not continue long. The moment which gives me Angela's hand shall restore you to liberty ; and, till that moment arrives, farewell.

Per. Stay, sir, and hear me !—By what authority presume you to call me captive ?—Have you forgotten that you speak to Northumberland's earl ?

Osm. Well may I forget him, who could so far forget himself. Was it worthy of Northumberland's earl to steal disguised into my castle, and plot with my servant to rob me of my most precious treasure ?

Per. Mine was that treasure—you deprived me of it basely, and I was justified in striving to regain my own.

Osm. Earl, nothing can justify unworthy means.—If you were wronged, why sought you not your right with your sword's point? I then should have esteemed you a noble foe, and as such would have treated you: but you have stooped to paltry artifice, and attacked me like some midnight ruffian, privately, and in disguise. By this am I authorised to forget your station, and make your penance as degrading as your offence was base.

Per. If such are indeed your sentiments, prove them now. Restore my sword, unsheath your own, and be Angela the conquerer's reward!

Osm. No earl Percy!—I am not so rash a gamester as to suffer that cast to be recalled, by which the stake is mine already. Angela is in my power: the only man who could wrest her from my arms, has wilfully made himself my captive: such he is, and such he shall remain.

Per. Insulting, coward.

Osm. Be calm, earl Percy!—You forget yourself. That I am no coward, my sword has proved in the fields of Scotland.—My sword shall again prove it, if, when you are restored to liberty, you still question the courage of my heart! Angela once mine, repeat your defiance, nor doubt my answering.

Per. Angela thine?—That she shall never be.—There are angels above who favour virtue, and the hour of retribution must one day arrive.—(*Throws himself upon the couch.*)

Osm. Muley and Saib!

Both. My lord?

Osm. To your charge I commit the earl; quit not this apartment, nor suffer him for one moment from your sight.

Saib and Muley. My lord, we shall obey you.

Osm. Farewell, earl Percy.

[*Goes off, attended by Hassan and Alarie, R.P.D.*

Saib. Look, Muley, how bitterly he frowns!

Muley. Now he starts from the sopha!—'Faith, he's in a monstrous fury!

Saib. That may well be:—when you mean to take in other people it certainly is provoking to be taken in yourself.

Per. (*After walking a few turns with a disordered air, suddenly stops.*)—He is gone to Angela! Gone perhaps, to renew that outrage whose completion my presence alone prevented!

Muley. Now he's in a deep study:—marry, if he studies himself out of this tower, he's a cleverer fellow than I take him for.

Per. Were I not Osmond's captive, all might yet be well. Summoning my vassals, who by this time must be near at hand, forcing the castle, and tearing Angela from the arms of her tyrant—Alas! my captivity has rendered this plan impracticable! And are there then no hopes of liberty?

Saib. He fixes his eyes on us.

Per. Might not these fellows—I can but try.—Now stand my friend, thou master-key to human hearts!—Aid me thou potent devil, gold!—Hear me my worthy friends.—Come nearer!

Saib. His worthy friends!

Per. My good fellows, you are charged with a disagreeable office, and to obey a tyrant's mandates cannot be pleasant to you; there is something in your looks which has prejudiced me too much in your favour to believe it possible.

Saib. Nay, there certainly is something in our appearance highly prepossessing.

Muley. And I knew that you must admire the delicacy of our complexions!

Per. The tincture of your skin, my good fellow, is of little consequence: many a worthy heart beats within a dusky bosom, and I am convinced that such an heart inhabits yours; for your looks tell me that you feel for, and are anxious to relieve, my sufferings.—See you this purse, my friends?

Muley. It's too far off, and I am short-sighted.—If you'll put it a little nearer—

Per. Restore me to liberty!—and not this purse alone, but ten time its value shall be yours.

Saib. To liberty?

Muley. That purse?

Saib. Muley!

Muley. Saib!

Per. (*Aside.*) By all my hopes they hesitate!—You well know, that my wealth and power are equal, not to say superior, to earl Osmond's: release me from my dungeon, and share that power and wealth!

Saib. I know not what to answer.

Muley. In truth, my lord, your offers are so generous, and that purse is so tempting—Saib what say you?—(*Winking to him.*)

Saib. The earl speaks so well, and promises so largely, that I own I'm strangely tempted.

Muley. Look you, Saib; will you stand by me?

Saib. (*After a moment's thought.*) I will!

Muley. There's my hand then!—My lord, we are your servants!

Per. This is beyond my hopes. You agree then to release me?

Muley. 'Tis impossible to do otherwise; for I feel that pity, generosity, and every moral feeling command me to trouble your lordship for that purse.

Per. There it is.—And now unlock the door.

Muley. (*Chinking the purse.*) Here it is!—And now I'm obliged to you. As for your promises, my lord, pray don't trouble yourself to remember them, as I sha'n't trouble myself to remember mine.

Per. (*Starting.*) Ha!—what mean you?

Saib. (*Firmly.*) Earl, that we are faithful!

(*Crosses to L.H.*)

Per. What! will you not keep your word?

Muley. In good truth, no; we mean to keep nothing—except the purse

Per. Confusion!—To be made the jest of such rascals!

Saib. Earl Percy, we are none :—We have but done our duty—you have but gained your just reward ; for they who seek to deceive others should ever be deceived themselves.

Per. Silence, fellow !—Leave me to my thoughts !
(*throwing himself passionately upon the couch.*)

Muley. Oh ! with all our hearts. We ask no better.

Saib. Muley, we share that purse ?

Muley. Undoubtedly. Sit down, and examine its contents.—(*They seat themselves on the floor in the front of the stage.*)

Per. How unfortunate, that the only merit of these villains should be fidelity !—

CHORUS OF VOICES, (*Singing without.*)

“*Sing Megen-oh ! Oh ! Megen-Ee !*”

Muley. Hark !—What’s that ?

Saib. I’ll see. (*Mounting upon the table.*)—This window is so high—

Muley. Here, here ! Take this chair.—(*Saib places the chair upon the table, and thus lifts himself to a level with the window, which he opens.*)

SONG AND CHORUS.

Motley. (*Singing without.*) Sleep you, or wake you,
lady bright ?

Chorus. (*Without.*) Sing Megen-oh ! Oh Megen-Ee,

Motley. Now is the fittest time for flight.

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh ! Oh ! Megen-Ee !

Motley. Know, from your tyrant father’s power

Beneath the window of your tower

A boat now waits to set you free :

Sing Megen-oh ! Oh ! Megen-Ee !

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh ! Oh ! Megen-Ee !

Per. (*Who has half-raised himself from the couch*

during the latter part of the song, and listened attentively.)—Surely I know that voice!

Muley. Now, what's the matter?

Saib. A boat lies at the foot of the tower, and the fishermen sing while they draw their nets.

Per. I could not be mistaken:—it was Gilbert.

SECOND STANZA.

Motley. Though deep the stream, though high the wall,

Chorus. Sing *Megen-oh!* Oh! *Megen-Ee!*

Motley. The danger trust me, love, is small:

Chorus. Sing *Megen-oh!* Oh! *Megen-Ee!*

Motley. To spring below then never dread;

My arms to catch you shall be spread;

And far from hence you soon shall be,

Sing *Megen-oh!* Oh! *Megen-Ee!*

Chorus.—Sing *Megen-oh!* Oh! *Megen-Ee!*

Per. I understand him—He bids me—Yet the danger—What course shall I pursue?

Muley. Pr'ythee, come down, Saib; I long to divide the purse—

Saib. Stay a moment: I'm with you. (*Shutting the window and descending.*) Here I am, and now for the purse!—(*They resume their seats upon the ground; Saib opens the purse, and begins to reckon the gold.*)—

Per. Yes, I must brave the danger—I will feign to sleep; and when my gaolers are off their guard, then aid me, blest Providence! (*Extending himself upon the couch.*)

Saib. Hold, Muley!—What if, instead of sharing the purse, we throw for its contents? Here are dice.

Muley. With all my heart: and look—to pass our time the better, here's a bottle of the best sack in the earl's cellar.

Saib. Good! Good!—And now, be this angel the stake:—But first, what is our prisoner doing?

Muley. Oh! he sleeps: mind him not.—Come, come, throw!

Saib. Here goes—nine!—now to you.

Muley. Nine too!—double the stake.

Saib. Agreed! and the throw is mine.—Hark! What noise? (*During this dialogue, Percy has approached the table in silence; at the moment that he prepares to mount it, Saib looks round, and Percy hastily throws himself back on the couch.*)

Muley. Oh!—nothing, nothing!

Saib. Methought I heard the earl—

Muley. Mere fancy!—you see he is sleeping soundly. Come, come; throw!

Saib. There then—eleven!

Muley. That's bad—huzza!—sixes!

Saib. Plague on your fortune!—come, double or quits!

Muley. Be it so, and I throw—zounds!—only five!

Saib. Then I think this hit must be mine—aces, by heavens!

Muley. Ha! ha! ha!—your health, friend!

Per. (*Who has again reached the table, mounted the chair, and opening the window, now stands at it, and signs to the men below.*) They see me, and extend a cloth beneath the window!—'Tis a fearful height!

Saib. Do you mean to empty the bottle?—Come, come—give it me:

Muley. Take it, blunder-head!—(*Saib drinks.*)

Per. They encourage me to venture!—Now then, or never!—(*Aloud.*)—angels of bliss protect me!—(*He throws himself from the window.*)

Muley and Saib. (*Starting at the noise.*) Hell and furies!

Saib. (*Dashes down the bottle, and climbs to the window hastily, while Muley remains below in an attitude of surprise.*) Escaped! Escaped!

Per. Mot. &c. (*Without.*) Huzza! huzza! huzza!

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A View of the River Conway, with a Fisherman's Hut.—Sun-set.*

Enter ALLAN and EDRIC, L.H.

Allan. Still they come not!—Dear, dear, still they come not!—Ah! these tumults are too much for my old body to bear.

Edr. Then you should have kept your old body at home. 'Tis a fine thing truly for a man of your age to be galloping about the country after a girl, who, by your own account, is neither your chick nor child!

Allan. Ah! She was more to me! She was my all, Edric, my all!—How could I bear my home when it no longer was the home of Angela?—How could I rest in my cottage at night when her sweet lips had not kissed me—and murmured, “Father, sleep well!”—She is so good! so gentle!—I was sick once, sick almost to death!—Angela was then my nurse and comforter: she watched me when I slept, and cheered me when I awoke: she rejoiced when I grew better; and when I grew worse, no medicine gave me ease like the tears of pity which fell on my burning cheeks from the eyes of my darling!

Edr. Tears of pity indeed! a little rhubarb would have done you much more good by half.—But our people stay a long time: perhaps Motley has been discovered and seized; if so, he will lose his life, the earl his freedom, Angela her lover, and what's worst of all, I shall lose my boat! I wish I hadn't lent it, for I doubt that Motley's scheme has failed.

Allan. I hope not—Oh! I hope not!—Should Percy remain a captive, Angela will be left unprotected in your wicked lord's power—Oh! that will break my poor old wife's heart for certain!

Edr. And if it should break it, a mighty misfortune truly!—Zounds! master Allan, any wife is at best a

bad thing : a poor one makes matters yet worse ; but when she's old, lord ! 'tis the very devil !

Allan. Hark ! hark ! Do you hear ? 'Tis the sound of oars !—They are friends !—Oh ! heaven be thanked ! the earl is with them.

(A boat appears R.H. with PERCY, MOTLEY, and Soldiers disguised as Fishermen.—They land.)

Per. *(Springing on shore.)* Once more then I breathe the air of liberty !—Worthy Gilbert, what words can suffice to thank you ?

Mot. *(R.H.)* None, therefore do not waste your breath in the attempt. You are safe—thanks to St. Peter and the blanket ! and your lady's deliverance now demands all your thoughts.—Ha ! who is that with Edrie ?

Per. Allan, by all my hopes !—Welcome, welcome, good old man !—Say, came my vassals with you ?

Allan. Three hundred chosen men are within the sound of your bugle ; but now, my lord, tell me of Angela. Is she well ? Did you speak to her ? And speaks she sometimes of me ?

Per. She is well, my old friend, and I have spoken to her—though but for a moment. But be comforted, good Allan ! Should other means fail, I will this very night attack the castle, and compel Osmond to resign his prey.

Allan. Heaven grant that you may succeed !—Let me but once see Angela your bride !—Let me but once hear her say the sweet words, “ Allan, I am happy ! ” then I and my old wife will seek our graves, lay us down, and die with pleasure !

Mot. Die with pleasure, you silly old man ! you shall do nothing so ridiculous.—But now let us talk of our affairs, which, if I mistake not, are in the high road to success.

Per. How ? has any intelligence reached you of your ally, the friar ?

Mot. You have guessed it. As it passed beneath his window, the pious porpus contrived to drop this letter into the boat. Pray examine it, my lord !

never can read when the wind's easterly. (*Motley gives Percy the Letter, who reads to himself.*) Its contents must needs be of consequence, for I assure you it comes from one of the greatest men in England.—Well sir, what says the letter?

Per. Listen.—“I have recognised you in spite of your disguise, and seize the opportunity to advise your exerting yourself solely to obtain earl Percy's liberty. Heed not Angela: I have sure and easy means for procuring her escape; and before the clock strikes two, you may expect me with her at the fisherman's hut. Farewell, and rely upon father Philip!”—Now, Gilbert, what say you? May the monk's fidelity be trusted?

Mot. His fidelity may undoubtedly; but whether his success will equal his good intentions, is a point which time alone can decide. Should it not——

Per. Then with my faithful vassals will I storm the castle to-morrow. But where are my followers?

Allan. Fearing lest their numbers should excite suspicion, I left them concealed in yonder wood.

Per. Guide me to them. Edric, for this night I must request the shelter of your hut.

Edr. Willingly, my lord. But my cottage is so humble, your treatment so wretched——

Per. Silence, my good fellow! The hut where good will resides is to me more welcome than a palace, and no food can be so sweet as that which is seasoned with smiles.—You give me your best; a monarch could give no more, and it happens not often that men ever give so much. Now farewell for an hour!——Allan, lead on!

[*Exeunt Percy, Allan, &c. L.H.*]

Mot. And in the mean while, friend Edric, I'll lend you an hand in preparing supper.

Edr. Truly the task won't give you much trouble, for times have gone hard with me of late. Our present lord sees no company, gives no entertainments, and thus I sell no fish. Things went better while earl Reginald lived.

Mot. What! you remember him?

Edr. Never shall I forget him, or his sweet lady. Why, I verily believe they possessed all the cardinal virtues!—So pious, so generous, so mild! so kind to the poor—and so fond of fish!

Mot. Fond of fish!—One of the cardinal virtues, of which I never heard before!

Edr. But these thoughts make me sad. Come, master Motley; your lord's supper still swims in the river:—if you'll help to catch it, why do so, and thank you heartily. Can you fish?

Mot. Can I? Who in this world cannot?—I'll assure you, friend Edric, there is no profession more universal than yours; we all spread our nets to catch something or other; and happy are they in this world, of disappointments, who throw out no nets save fishing ones! (*Retires up the stage, as if going to the boat.*)

SCENE II.—*The Castle-hall.*

Enter KENRIC, L.H.

Ken. Yonder he stalks, and seems buried in himself!—Now then to attack him while my late service is still fresh upon his memory. Should he reject my petition positively, he shall have good cause to repent his ingratitude. Percy is in the neighbourhood; and that secret, known only to myself, will surely——But, silence!—Look where he comes!

Enter OSMOND, R.H.

Osm. It shall not be! Away with these foreboding terrors, which weigh down my heart!—I will forget the past, I will enjoy the present, and make these raptures again mine, which——Ah! no, no, no!—Conscience, that serpent, winds her folds round the cup of my bliss, and, ere my lips can reach it, her venom is mingled with the draught. And see where he walks, the chief object my fears!—He shall not be so long!

His anxiety to leave me, his mysterious threats——No, no! I will not live in fear.——Soft!——He advances!

Ken. So melancholy, my lord?

Osm. Aye, Kenric, and must be so till Angela is mine. Know that even now she extorted from me a promise, that till to-morrow I would leave her unmolested.

Ken. But till to-morrow?

Osm. But till to-morrow?——Oh! in that little space a lover's eye views myriads of dangers!——Yet think not, good Kenric, that your late services are undervalued by me, or that I have forgotten those for which I have been long your debtor. When, bewildered by hatred of Reginald, and grief for Evelina's loss, my dagger was placed on the throat of their infant, your hand arrested the blow——Judge then how grateful I must feel when I behold in Angela her mother's living counterpart.——Worthy Kenric, how can I repay your services?

Ken. These you may easily.——But what, earl Ormond, what can repay me for the sacrifice of my innocence?——My hands were pure till you taught me to stain them with blood—you painted in strong colours the shame of servitude—you promised freedom, riches, independence.——Let me then claim that independence so long promised, and seek for peace in some other climate, since memory forbids me to taste it in this.

Osm. Kenric, ere named, your wish was granted. In a far distant country a retreat is already prepared for you: there may you hush those clamours of conscience, which must reach me, I fear, e'en in the arms of Angela.

Ken. (*Affected.*) My lord!——Gratitude——Amazement——And I doubted——I suspected——Oh! my good lord, how have I wrong'd your kindness!

Osm. No more—I must not hear you!——(*Aside.*) Shame! shame! that ever my soul should stoop to dissembling with my slave! (*Crosses to L.H.*)

SAIB enters, L.H. and advances with apprehension.

Osm. How now?—Why this confusion?—Why do you tremble?—Speak!

Saib. My lord!—The prisoner——

Osm. The prisoner?—Go on! go on!

Saib. (*Kneeling.*) Pardon, my lord, pardon! Our prisoner has escaped!

Osm. Villain! (*Wild with rage he draws his dagger, and rushes upon Saib—Kenric holds his arm.*)

Ken. Hold! hold!—What would you do?

Osm. (*Struggling.*) Unhand me, or by heaven——

Ken. Away! away!—Fly, fellow, fly and save yourself! [*Exit Saib, L.H.*] (*Releasing Osmond.*) Consider, my lord—Haply 'twas not by his keeper's fault that——

Osm. (*Furiously.*) What is't to me by whose?—Is not my rival fled?—Soon will Northumberland's guards encircle my walls, and force from me——Yet that by heaven they shall not! No! Rather than resign her, my own hand shall give this castle a prey to flames; then, plunging with Angela into the blazing gulph, I'll leave these ruins to tell posterity how desperate was my love, and how dreadful my revenge! (*Going, he stops, and turns to Kenric.*)—And you, who dared to rush between me and my resentment—you who could so well succeed in saving others—now look to yourself! [*Exit R.H.*]

Ken. Ha! that look—that threat——Yet he seemed so kind, so grateful!—He smiled too!—Oh! there is ever danger when a villain smiles.

SAIB enters softly, L.H. looking round him with caution.

Saib. (*In a low voice.*) Hist!—Kenric!

Ken. How now?—What brings——

Saib. Silence, and hear me!—You have saved my life; nor will I be ungrateful—Look at this phial!

Ken. Ha! did the earl——

Saib. Even so: a few drops of this liquor should to-night have flavoured your wine—you would never have drank again! Mark me then—When I offer you a goblet at supper, drop it as by accident. For this night I give you life: use it to quit the castle; for no longer than till to-morrow dare I disobey our lord's commands. Farewell, and fly from Conway—You bear with you my thanks. [*Exit.* L.II.]

Ken. Can it be possible? Is not all this a dream?——Villain! villain!—Yes, yes, I must away!—But tremble, traitor!—A bolt, of which you little think, hangs over, and shall crush you!—The keys are still in my possession—Angela shall be the partner of my flight.—My prisoner too——Yet hold! May not resentment——may not Reginald's sixteen year's captivity——Oh! no! Angela shall be my advocate; and, grateful for her own, for her parent's life preserved, she can—she will obtain my pardon—Yet, should she fail, at least I shall drag down Osmond in my fall, and sweeten death's bitter cup with vengeance. [*Exit* L.II.]

SCENE III.—*The Cedar-room, with Folding-doors in the middle, and a large antique Bed; on one side is the Portrait of a Lady, on the other that of a Warrior armed. Both are at full length.—After a pause the Female Portrait falls back, and FATHER PHILIP, after looking in, advances cautiously.*

F. Phil. (*Closing the pannel.*) Thus far I have proceeded without danger, though not without difficulty. Yon narrow passage is by no means calculated for persons of my habit of body. By my holidame, I begin to suspect that the fool is in the right! I certainly am growing corpulent.—And now, how shall I employ myself?—Sinner that I am, why did I forget my bottle of sack?—The time will pass tediously till Angela comes.—And, to complete the business, yonder is the haunted oratory. What if the ghost should pop out

on me? Blessed St. Bridget, there would be a tête-à-tête! Yet this is a foolish fear: 'tis yet scarce eight o'clock, and your ghosts always keep late hours; yet I don't like the idea of our being such near neighbours. If Alice says true, the apparition just now lives next door to me; but the lord forbid that we should ever be visiting acquaintance!

Osm. (*without.*) What, Alice! Alice, I say!

F. Phil. By St. David, 'tis the earl! I'll away as fast I can. (*Trying to open the door.*) I can't find the spring.—Lord forgive me my sins;—Where can I hide myself?—Ha! the bed! 'Tis the very thing. (*Throws himself into the bed, and conceals himself under the clothes.*) Heaven grant that it mayn't break down with me! for, oh! what a fall would be there, my countrymen!—They come! (*The door is unlocked.*)

Enter OSMOND, ANGELA, and ALICE, L.H.D.

Osm. (*Entering.*) You have heard my will, lady. Till your hand is mine, you quit not this chamber.

Ang. If then it must be so, welcome my eternal prison!—Yet eternal it shall not be. My hero, my guardian-angel is at liberty. Soon shall his horn make these hateful towers tremble, and your fetters be exchanged for the arms of Percy.

Osm. Beware, beware, Angela! Dare not before me——

Ang. Before you! Before the world!—Is my attachment a disgrace? No! 'tis my pride; for its object is deserving. Long ere I knew him, Percy's fame was dear to me. While I still believed him the peasant Edwy, often, in his hearing, have I dwelt upon Northumberland's praise, and chid him that he spoke of our lord so coldly! Ah! little did I think that the man then seated beside me was he whom I envied for his power of doing good, whom I loved for exerting that power so largely!—Judge then, earl Osmond; on my arrival here how strongly I must have felt the contrast!—What peasant names you his benefactor?

What beggar has been comforted by your bounty? what sick man preserved by your care?—Your breast is unmoved by woe, your ear is deaf to complaint, your doors are barred against the poor and wretched. Not so are the gates of Alnwick castle; they are open as their owner's heart.

Osm. Insulting girl!—This to my face?

Ang. Nay, never bend your brows! Shall I tremble, because you frown? Shall my eye sink, because anger flashes from yours?—No! that would ill become the bride of Northumberland.

Osm. Amazement!—Can this be the gentle, timid Angela?

Ang. Wonder you that the worm should turn when you trample it so cruelly? Oh! wonder no more: ere he was torn from me, I clasped Percy to my breast, and my heart caught a spark of that fire which flames in his unceasingly!

Alice. Caught fire, lady!

Osm. Silence, old crone!—I have heard you calmly, Angela; now then hear me. Twelve hours shall be allowed you to reflect upon your situation: till that period is elapsed, this chamber shall be your prison, and Alice, on whose fidelity I can depend, your sole attendant. This term expired, should you still reject my hand, force shall obtain for me what love denies. Speak not: I will hear nothing!—I swear that to-morrow sees you mine, or undone! and, skies, rain curses on me if I keep not my oath!—Mark that, proud girl! mark it, and tremble! [*Exit L.H.D.*]

P. Phil. Heaven be praised, he's gone!

(*From the bed.*)

Ang. Tremble, did he say?—Alas! how quickly is my boasted courage vanished!—Yet I will not despair: there is a power in heaven, there is a Percy on earth; on them will I rely to save me.

Alice. The first may, lady; but as to the second, he'll be of no use, depend on't. Now might I advise, you'd accept my lord's offer: What matters it whether the man's name be Osmond or Percy? An earl's an

earl after all; and though one may be something richer than t'other——

Ang. Oh! silence, Alice!—nor aid my tyrant's designs: rather instruct me how to counteract them; assist me to escape.

Alice. I help you to escape! Not for the best gown in your ladyship's wardrobe! I tremble at the very idea of my lord's rage; and, besides, had I the will, I've not the power. Kenrie keeps the keys; we could not possibly quit the castle without his knowledge; and if the earl threatens to use force with you—Oh gemini! what would he use with me, lady?

Ang. Threatens, Alice!—I despise his threats! Ere it pillows Osmond's head will I plunge this poniard in my bosom.

Alice. Holy fathers!—A dagger!

Ang. Even now, as I wandered through the armoury, my eye was attracted by its glittering handle.—Look, Alice! it bears Osmond's name; and the point—

Alice. Is rusty with blood!—Take it away, lady! take it away! I never see blood without fainting!

Ang. (*Putting up the dagger.*) This weapon may render me good service.—But, ah! what service has it rendered Osmond? Haply 'twas this very poniard which drank his brother's blood—or which pierced the fair breast of Evelina! Said you not, Alice, that this was her portrait?

Alice. I did, lady; and the likeness was counted excellent.

Ang. How fair! How heavenly fair!

Alice. (*Having locked the folding doors.*) Ah! 'twas a sad day for me, when I heard of the dear lady's loss! Look at that bed, lady;—that very bed was hers. How often have I seen her sleeping in that bed—and, oh! how like an angel she looked when sleeping! I remember, that just after earl Reginald—Oh! Lord! didn't somebody shake the curtain?

Ang. Absurd! It was the wind.

Alice. I declare it made me tremble! Well, as I was saying, I remember, just after earl Reginald had set

out for the Scottish wars, going into her room one morning, and hearing her sob most bitterly.—So advancing to the bed-side, as it might be thus—“My lady! says I, with a low courtesy,” “Isn’t your ladyship well?”—So, with that, she raised her head slowly above the quilt, and, giving me a mournful look—*(Here, unseen by Angela, who is contemplating Reginald’s portrait, Father Philip lifts up his head, and gives a deep groan.)*

Alice. Jesu Maria! the devil! the devil!

[Exit L.H.D.]

Ang. *(Turning round.)* How now? *(Father Philip rising from the bed—it breaks under him, and he rolls at Angela’s feet.)* Good heavens! *(Attempting to pass him, he detains her by her robe.)*

F. Phil. Stay, daughter, stay! If you run, I can never overtake you!

Ang. Amazement! Father Philip!

F. Phil. The very same, and at present the best friend that you have in the world. Daughter, I came to save you.

Ang. To save me? Speak! Proceed!

F. Phil. Observe this picture; it conceals a spring, whose secret is unknown to all in the castle except myself. Upon touching it, the pannel slides back, and a winding passage opens into the marble hall. Thence we must proceed to the vaulted vestibule; a door is there concealed, similar to this; and, after threading the mazes of a subterranean labyrinth, we shall find ourselves in safety on the outside of the castle walls.

Ang. Oh! worthy, worthy father! Quick let us hasten! let us not lose one moment!

F. Phil. Hold! hold! Not so fast. You forget that between the hall and vestibule we must traverse many chambers much frequented at this early hour. Wait till the castle’s inhabitants are asleep. Expect me, without fail, at one; keep up your spirits, and doubt not of success. Now then I must away, lest the earl should perceive my absence.

Ang. Stay yet one moment, Tell me, does Percy—

F. Phil. I have apprised him, that this night will restore you to liberty, and he expects you at the fisherman's cottage. Now, then, farewell, fair daughter!

[*Exit F. Phil. through the sliding pannel.*]

Ang. Good friar, till one, farewell! Till that hour arrives, will I kneel at the feet of yonder saint, there tell my beads, and pray for morning!

(*Soft music, as the scene comes down very slowly.*)

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Castle-Hall: the Lamps are lighted.*

Enter FATHER PHILIP, R.H.

F. Phil. 'Tis near midnight, and the earl is already retired to rest. What if I ventured now to the lady's chamber? Hark, I hear the sound of footsteps!

Enter ALICE, L.H.

F. Phil. How, Alice, is it you?

Alice. So! So! Have I found you at last, father?—I have been in search of you these four hours!—Oh! I've been so frightened since I saw you, that I wonder I keep my senses!

F. Phil. So do I; for I'm sure they're not worth the trouble. And, pray, what has alarmed you thus? I warrant you've taken an old cloak pinned against the wall for a spectre, or discovered the devil in the shape of a tabby-cat.

Alice. (*Looking round in terror.*) For the love of

heaven, father, don't name the devil! or, if you must speak of him, pray mention the good gentleman with proper politeness. I'm sure, for my own part, I had always a great respect for him, and if he hears me, I dare say he'll own as much, for he certainly haunts this castle in the form of my late lady.

F. Phil. Form of a fiddlestick!—Don't tell me of your——

Alice. Father, on the word of a virgin, I saw him this very evening in lady Angela's bed!

F. Phil. In lady Angela's?—On my conscience, the devil has an excellent taste! But, Alice! Alice! how dare you trot about the house at this time of night, propagating such abominable falsehoods?—One comfort is, that nobody will believe you. Lady Angela's virtue is too well known, and I'm persuaded she wouldn't suffer the devil to put a single claw into her bed for the universe!

Alice. How you run on!—Lord bless me, she wasn't in bed herself.

F. Phil. Oh!—Was she not?

Alice. No, to be sure: but you shall hear how it happened. We were in the cedar-room together; and while we were talking of this and that, lady Angela suddenly gave a great scream. I looked round, and what should I see but a tall figure all in white extended upon the bed! At the same time I heard a voice, which I knew to be the countess Evelina's, pronounce in an hollow tone—"Alice! Alice! Alice!" three times. You may be certain that I was frightened enough. I instantly took to my heels; and just as I got without side of the door, I heard a loud clap of thunder.

F. Phil. Well done, Alice!—A very good story, upon my word. It has but one fault—"Tis not true.

Alice. Odds my life, father, how can you tell any thing about it? Sure I should know best; for I was there, and you were not. I repeat it—I heard the voice as plain as I hear yours: Do you think I've no ears?

F. Phil. Oh! far from it: I think you've uncommonly good ones; for you not only hear what has been said, but what has not. As to this wonderful story of yours, Alice, I don't believe one word of it: I'll be sworn that the voice was no more like your lady's than like mine; and that the devil was no more in the bed than I was. Therefore, take my advice, set your heart at rest, and go quietly to your chamber, as I am now going to mine. Good night. [*Exit L.H.*]

Alice. There, he's gone!—Dear heart! Dear heart! what shall I do now?—'Tis past twelve o'clock, and stay by myself I dare not.—I'll e'en wake the laundry maid, make her sit up in my room all night; and 'tis hard if two women a'n't a match for the best devil in christendom. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Enter SAIB and HASSAN, L.H.

Saib. The earl then has forgiven me!—A moment longer, and his pardon would have come too late. Had not Kenric held his hand, by this time I should be at supper with St. Peter.

Has. Your folly well deserved such a reward. Knowing the earl's hasty nature, you should have shunned him till the first storm of passion was past, and circumstances had again made your ministry needful. Anger then would have armed his hand in vain; for interest, the white man's god, would have blunted the point of his dagger.

Saib. I trusted that his gratitude for my past services——

Has. European gratitude?—Seek constancy in the winds—fire in ice—darkness in the blaze of sun-shine!—But seek not gratitude in the breast of an European!

Saib. Then, why so attached to Osmond? For what do you value him?

Has. Not for his virtues, but for his vices, Saib: can there for me be a greater cause to love him? Am I not branded with scorn? Am I not marked out

for dishonour? Was I not free, and am I not a slave? Was I not once beloved, and am I not now despis'd? What man, did I tender my service, would accept the negro's friendship? What woman, did I talk of affection, would not turn from the negro with disgust? Yet, in my own dear land, my friendship was courted, my love was returned. I had parents, children, wife!—Bitter thought, in one moment all were lost to me! Can I remember this, and not hate these white men? Can I think how cruelly they have wronged me, and not rejoice when I see them suffer? Attached to Osmond, say you?—Saib, I hate him! Yet viewing him as an avenging fiend sent hither to torment his fellows, it glads me that he fills his office so well! Oh! 'tis a thought which I would not barter for empires, to know that in this world he makes others suffer, and will suffer himself for their tortures in the next!

Saib. But say, you be one of those whom he causes to suffer, how then? Hassan, I will sleep no more in the lion's den. My resolve is taken: I will away from the castle, and seek in some other service that security——

Osm. (*Within, M.D.*) What—hoa—help!—lights there!—lights!

Hus. Hark! Surely 'twas the earl!

OSMOND rushes in wildly at M.D.

Osm. Save me! Save me! They are at hand! Oh! let them not enter! (*Sinks into the arms of Saib.*)

Saib. What can this mean? See how his eyes roll! how violently he trembles!

Hus. Speak, my lord—do you not know us?

Osm. (*Recovering himself.*) Ha! Whose voice?—Hassan's?—And Saib too here?—Oh! was it then but a dream? Did I not hear those dreadful, those damning words—Still, still they ring in my ears. Hassan!

Hassan! Death must be bliss, in flames or on the rack, compared to what I have this night suffered!

Has. Compose yourself, my lord—Can a mere dream unman you thus?

Osm. A mere dream, say'st thou? Hassan, 'twas a dream of such horror! Did such dreams haunt my bitterest foe, I should wish him no severer punishment. Mark you not, how the ague of fear still makes my limbs tremble? Rolls not my eyes as if still gazing on the spectre? Are not my lips convuls'd, as were they yet prest by the kiss of corruption? Oh! 'twas a sight that might have bleached joy's rosy cheek for ever, and strowed the snows of age upon youth's auburn ringlets!—Hassan, thou saidst 'twas but a dream—I was deceived by fancy. Hassan, thou said'st true; there is not, there cannot be, a world to come.

Has. My lord!—

Osm. Answer me not!—Let me not hear the damning truth!—Tell me not, that flames await me! that for moments of bliss I must endure long ages of torture!—Say, that with my body must perish my soul! For, Oh! should my fearful dream be prophetic!—Hark, fellows! Instruments of my guilt, listen to my punishment!—Methought I wandered through the low-browed caverns, where repose the reliques of my ancestors! My eye dwelt with awe on their tombs, with disgust on mortality's surrounding emblems! Suddenly a female form glided along the vault:—It was Angela! She smiled upon me, and beckoned me to advance. I flew towards her; my arms were already unclosed to clasp her—when suddenly her figure changed, her face grew pale, a stream of blood gushed from her bosom!—Hassan, 'twas Evelina!

Saib and Has. Evelina!

Osm. Such as when she sank at my feet expiring, while my hand grasped the dagger still crimsoned with her blood!—"We meet again this night!" murmured her hollow voice! "Now rush to my arms, but first see what you have made me! Embrace me my bride-

groom! We must never part again!"—While speaking, her form withered away: the flesh fell from her bones; her eyes burst from their sockets: a skeleton loathsome and meagre, clasped me in her mouldering arms!—

Saib. Most horrible!

Osm. Her infected breath was mingled with mine; her rotting fingers pressed my hand, and my face was covered with her kisses! Oh! then, then how I trembled with disgust! And now blue dismal flames gleamed along the walls; the tombs were rent asunder; bands of fierce spectres rushed round me in frantic dance; furiously they gnashed their teeth while they gazed upon me, and shrieked in loud yell—"Welcome, thou fratricide! Welcome, thou lost for ever!—Horror burst the bands of sleep; distracted I flew hither: But my feelings—words are too weak, too powerless to express them."

Saib. My lord, my lord, this was no idle dream! 'Twas a celestial warning; 'twas your better angel that whispered—"Osmond, repent your former crimes! Commit not new ones!"—Remember, that this night should Kenric—

Osm. Kenric?—Oh! speak! Drank he the poison?

Saib. Obedient to your orders, I presented it at supper; but ere the cup reached his lips, his favourite dog sprang upon his arm, and the liquor fell to the ground untasted.

Osm. Praised be heaven! Then my soul is lighter by a crime!—Kenric shall live, good Saib. What though he quit me, and betray my secrets? Proofs he cannot bring against me, and bare assertions will not be believed. At worst should his tale be credited, long ere Percy can wrest her from me, shall Angela be mine. Hassan to your vigilance I leave the care of my beloved. Fly to me that instant, should any unbidden foot-step approach yon chamber-door. I'll to my couch again. Follow me, Saib, and watch me while I sleep. Then, if you see my limbs convulsed, my teeth

clenched, my hair bristling, and cold dews trembling on my brow! Seize me! Rouse me! Snatch me from my bed! I must not dream again.—Oh! how I hate thee, sleep!—Friend of virtue, oh! how I dread thy coming! [*Exit with Saib through M.D.*]

Has. Yes, thou art sweet, vengeance! Oh! how it joys me when the white man suffers! Yet weak are his pangs, compared to those I felt when torn from thy shores, O native Africa! from thy bosom, my faithful Samba!—Ah! dost thou still exist, my wife? Has sorrow for my loss, traced thy smooth brow with wrinkles?—My boy too, whom on that morning when the man-hunters seized me, I left sleeping on thy bosom, say, lives he yet? Does he ever speak of me? Does he ask, “Mother, describe to me my father; show me how the warrior looked?”—Ha! has my bosom still room for thoughts so tender? Hence with them! Vengeance must possess it all! Oh! when I forget my wrongs, may I forget myself! When I forbear to hate these christians, god of my fathers! mayst thou hate me! Ha! Whence that light? A man moves this way with a lamp! How cautiously he steals along! He must be watched. This friendly column will shield me from his regards. Silence! He comes.
(*Retires*)

Enter KENRIC, softly, with a lamp, R.H.

Ken. All is hushed! The castle seems buried in sleep. Now then to Angela! [*Exit, L.H.*]

Has. (*Advancing.*)—It was Kenric!—Still he moves onwards—Now he stops—’Tis at the door of Angela’s chamber!—He unlocks it!—He enters!—Away then to the earl: christian, soon shall we meet again! [*Exit, M.D.*]

SCENE II.—*Angela’s Apartment.*

ANGELA, stands by the window, which is open, and through which the moon is seen.

Ang. Will it never arrive, this tedious lingering hour? Sure an age must have elapsed since the friar left me, and still the bell strikes not one! Hark! Surely I heard—some one unlocks the door!—Oh! should it be the earl! should he not retire ere the monk arrives!—The door opens!—How!—Kenric here!—Speak—what would you?

Enter KENRIC, L.H.

Ken. Softly, lady!—If over-heard, I am lost, and your fate is connected with mine—

Ang. What means this mystery?—This midnight visit—

Ken. Is the visit of a friend, of a penitent!—lady, I must away from the castle: the keys are in my possession: I will make you the companion of my flight, and deliver you safe into the hands of Percy.—But, ere we depart—(*Kneeling.*)—Oh! tell me, lady, will you plead for me with one, who to me alone owes sixteen years of hard captivity?

Ang. Rise, Kenric: I understand you not. Of what captive do you speak?

Ken. Of one, who by me has been most injured, who to you will be most dear. Listen, lady, to my strange narration. I was brought up with Osmond, was the partner of his pleasures, the confident of his cares. The latter sprang solely from his elder brother, whose birth-right he coveted, whose superiority he envied. Yet his aversion burst not forth, till Evelina Neville, rejecting his hand, bestowed hers with her heart on Reginald. Then did Osmond's passion overleap all bounds. He resolved to assassinate his brother when returning from the Scottish wars, carry off the lady, and make himself master of her person by force. This scheme he imparted to me: he flattered, threatened, promised, and I yielded to his seduction!

Ang. Wretched man!

Ken. Condemn me not unheard. 'Tis true, that I followed Osmond to the scene of slaughter, but no

blood that day imbrued my hand. It was the earl whose sword struck Reginald to the ground: it was the earl whose dagger was raised to complete his crime, when Evelina threw herself upon her husband's body, and received the weapon in her own.

Ang. Dreadful! dreadful!

Ken. Osmond's wrath became madness. He gave the word for slaughter, and Reginald's few attendants were butchered on the spot. Scarce could my prayers and arguments save from his wrath, his infant neice, whose throat was already gored by his poniard. Angela, yours still wears that mark.

Ang. Mine?—Almighty powers!

Ken. Lady, 'tis true. I concealed in Allan's cottage the heiress of Conway: There were you doomed to languish in obscurity, till, alarmed by the report of his spies that Percy loved you, he caused me to reclaim you from Allan, and resolved, by making you his wife, to give himself a lawful claim to these possessions.

Ang. The monster! Oh! good good Kenrie! and you knelt to me for pardon? You to whom I owe my life! You to whom—

Ken. Hold! oh! hold!—lady, how little do I deserve your thanks!—Oh! listen! listen!—I was the last to quit the bloody spot: sadly was I retiring, when a faint groan struck my ear. I sprang from my horse; I placed my hand on Reginald's heart; it beat beneath the pressure! (*Here Osmond appears at the door, motions L.H.S.E. to Saib, &c. to retire, and advances himself unobserved.*)

Ang. It beat! It beat! Cruel, and your dagger—

Ken. Oh! that would have been mercy! No, lady, It struck me, how strong would be my hold over Osmond, while his brother was in my power; and this reflection determined me to preserve him. Having plunged the other bodies in the Conway's flood, I placed the bleeding earl's on my horse before me, and conveyed him still insensible to a retreat, to all except

myself a secret. There I tended his wounds carefully, and succeeded in preserving his life.—Lady, Reginald still exists.—(*Here Osmond with a furious look draws his dagger, and motions to stab Kenric. A moments reflection makes him stay his hand, and he returns the weapon into the sheath.*)

Ang. Still exists, say you? My father still exists?

Ken. He does, if a life so wretched can be termed existence. While his swoon lasted, I chained him to his dungeon wall; and no sooner were his wounds healed, than I entered his prison no more. Lady, near sixteen years have passed, since an human voice struck the ear of Reginald!

Ang. Alas! alas!

Ken. But the hour of his release draws near: then follow me in silence: I will guide you to Reginald's dungeon: this key unlocks the castle gates; and ere the cock crows, safe in the arms of Percy—(*Here his eye falls upon Osmond, who has advanced between him and Angela. She shrieks, and sinks into a chair.*) Horror!—The earl! —Undone for ever!

Osm. Miscreant!—Within there!

Enter SAIB, HASSAN, and MULEY, L.H.

Osm. Hence with that traitor! confine him in the western tower!

Ang. (*Starting wildly from her seat.*) Yet speak once more, Kenric! Where is my father? What place conceals him?

Osm. Let him not speak! Away with him! (*Kenric is forced off by the Africans. L.H.*)

Osm. (*Paces the stage with a furious air, while Angela eyes him with terror: at length he stops, and addresses her.*) Nay, stifle not your curses! Why should your lips be silent when your eye speaks? Is there not written on every feature "Vengeance on the assassin! Justice on my mother's murderer?"—But mark me, Angela! Compared to that which soon

must be thine, these titles are sweet and lovely. Know'st thou the word parricide, Angela? Knows't thou their pangs who shed the blood of a parent?—Those pangs must be thine to-morrow. This long-concealed captive, this new-found father—

Ang. Your brother, Osmond? your brother?—Surely you cannot, will not—

Osm. Still doubt you, that I both can, and will?—Remember Kenric's tale! Remember, though the first blow failed, the second will strike deeper!—But from whom must Reginald receive that second? Not from his rival brother? not from his inveterate foe?—from his daughter, his unfeeling daughter! 'Tis she, who, refusing me her hand, will place a dagger in mine, 'tis she, whose voice declaring that she hates me, will bid me plunge that dagger in her father's heart!

Ang. Man! man! drive me not mad!

Osm. Then fancy that he lies in some damp solitary dungeon, writhing in death's agonies, his limbs distorted, his eye-strings breaking, his soul burthened with crimes, his last words curses on his unnatural child, who could have saved him, but who would not!

Ang. Horrible! horrible!

Osm. Must Reginald die, or will Angela be mine?

Ang. Thine?—She will perish first!

Osm. You have pronounced his sentence, and his blood be on your head!—Farewell!

Ang. (*Detaining him, and throwing herself on her knees.*) Hold! hold! Look with pity on a creature whom your cruelty has bowed to the earth, whose heart you have almost broken, whose brain you have almost turned!—Mercy, Osmond! Oh! mercy! mercy!

Osm. Lovely, lovely suppliant! Why owe to cold consent what force may this instant give me?—It shall be so, and thus—(*Attempting to clasp her in his arms, she starts from the ground suddenly, and draws her dagger with a distracted look.*)

Ang. Away! approach me not! dare not to touch me, or this poniard—

Osm. Foolish girl ! let me but say the word, and thou art disarmed that moment. (*Attempting to seize it, his eye rests upon the hilt, and he starts back with horror.*) By hell, the very poniard which—

Ang. (*In an exulting tone.*) Ha ! hast thou found me, villain ?—Villain, dost thou know this weapon ? Know'st thou whose blood incrusts the point ? Murderer, it flowed from the bosom of my mother !

Osm. Within there ! help !—(*Hassan and Aluric enter.*) Oh ! God in heaven ! (*He falls senseless into their arms, and they convey him from the chamber, the door is locked after them.*)

Ang. He faints !—Long may the villain wear thy chains, oblivion ! Long be it ere he wakes to commit new crimes !—(*She remains for some moments prostrate on the ground in silent sorrow. The castle-bell strikes "one !"*) Hark ! the bell 'Tis the time which the monk appointed. He will not tarry : Ha ! what was that ? Methought the sound of music floated by me ! It seemed as some one had struck the guitar !—I must have been deceived ; it was but fancy. (*A plaintive voice sings within, accompanied by a guitar.*)

“ Lullaby !—Lullaby !—Hush thee, my dear,
“ Thy father is coming, and soon will be here ! ”

Ang. Heavens ! The very words which Alice—

(*The folding doors unclose, and the oratory is seen illuminated. In its centre stands a tall female figure, her white and flowing garments spotted with blood ; her veil is thrown back, and discovers a pale and melancholy countenance ; her eyes are lifted upwards, her arms extended towards heaven, and a large wound appears upon her bosom. Angela sinks upon her knees, with her eyes riveted upon the figure, which for some moments remains motionless. At length the spectre advances slowly, to a soft and plaintive strain ; she stops opposite to Reginald's picture, and gazes upon it in silence. She then turns, approaches An-*

gela, seems to invoke a blessing upon her, points to the picture, and retires to the oratory. The music ceases. Angela rises with a wild look, and follows the vision, extending her arms towards it. The spectre waves her hand, as bidding her farewell. Instantly the organ's swell is heard; a full chorus of female voices chaunt "Jubilate!" a blaze of light flashes through the oratory, and the folding doors close with a loud noise.)

END OF ACT IV.

ACT. V.

SCENE I.—*A view of Conway-castle by moonlight.*

Enter ALLAN and MOTLEY, L.H.

Allan. But should the friar's plot have failed—

Mot. Failed and a priest and a petticoat concerned in it,—oh, no, a plot composed of such good ingredients cannot but succeed—ugh! would I were again seated by the fisher's hearth—the wind, blows cruel sharp and bitter.

Allan. For shame Gilbert, is not my lord equally exposed to its severity

Mot. Oh the flame in his bosom, keeps him warm, and in a cold night love wraps one up, better, than a blanket; but that not being, my situation, the present object of my desires, is a blazing wood fire, and Venus would look to me less lovely, than a smoking sack posset.—Oh, when I was in love I managed matters much better, I always paid my addresses by the fire side, and contrived to urge my soft suit, just at dinner

time—then how I fill'd my fair one's ears with fine speeches, while she fill'd my trencher with roast beef.—Then what figures and tropes came out of my mouth and what dainties and tid bits went in!—'Twould have done your heart good to hear me talk, and see me eat, and you'd have found it no easy matter to decide whether I'd most wit or appetite—

Allan. And who was the object of this voracious passion—

Mot. A person well calculated, to charm both my heart, and my stomach, it was a lady of great merit, who did earl Percy's father, the honour to superintend his culinary concerns; I was scarce fifteen, when she kindled a flame in my heart while lighting the kitchen fire, from that moment I thought on nothing but her—my mornings were passed in composing poems on her beauty; my evenings in reciting them in her ear, for nature had equally denied the fair creature and myself the faculty of reading and writing.

Allan. You were successful I hope.

Mot. Why at length she consented to be mine; when, oh! cruel fortune; taking one night a drop too much—poor dear creature, she never got the better of it—I wept her loss, and composed an elegy upon it—it began thus—

“ Baked be the pies to coals,

“ Burn roast meat burn,

“ Boil o'er ye pots—ye spits forget to turn,

Cindrelia's death—

Enter EARL PERCY, R.H. *over the bridge.*

Allan. Here comes the earl,

Mot. In truth my lord you venture too near the castle; should you fall into Osmond's power a second time; your next jump, may be into a better world—

Per. Oh, there's no danger Gilbert, my followers are not far off, and will join me, at a moment's warning; then fear not for me,

Mot. With all my heart—but permit me to fear for myself—we are now, within bow shot of the castle—the archers may think proper to amuse us with a proof of their skill, and were I to feel an arrow quivering in my gizzard, probably I should be much more surprised, than pleased. Good my lord, let us back to the fisherman's hut.

Per. Your advice may be wise Gilbert, but I cannot follow it—see you nothing near yonder tower?

Mot. Yes certainly.—Two persons advance towards us : yet they cannot be our friends for I see neither the lady's petticoat nor the monk's paunch !

Per. Still they approach, though slowly : one leans on his companion, and seems to move with pain. Let us retire and observe them.

Mot. Away, sir : I'm at your heels.—

(*They retire, R.H.S.E.*)

Enter SAIB conducting KENRIC, R.H.U.E.

Saib. Nay, yet hold up a while !—now we are near the fisher's cottage.

Ken. Good Saib, I needs must stop !—enfeebled by Osmond's tortures, my limbs refuse to bear me further !—here lay me down : then fly to Percy, guide him to the dungeon, and, ere 'tis too late bid him save the father of Angela !

Per. (*To Motley.*)—Hark ! did you hear ?

Saib. Yet, to leave you thus alone !—

Ken. Oh ! heed not me ! think, that on these few moments depends our safety, Angela's freedom, Reginald's life !—you have the master-key ! fly then—oh ! fly to Percy ! (*Percy and Motley come forward, R.H. to Kenric and Saib.*)

Per. Said he not Reginald ?—speak again, stranger ! What of Reginald ?

Saib. Ha ! look up, Kenric !—'tis Percy's-self !

Per. and Mot. How !—Kenric ?

Ken. (*Sinking at Percy's feet.*) Yes, the guilty, the

penitent Kenric! oh surely 'twas heaven sent you hither! know, earl Percy, that Reginald lives, that Angela is his daughter!

Per. Amazement! and is this known to Osmond?

Ken. Two hours have scarcely passed since he surprised the secret. Tortures compelled me to avow where Reginald was hidden, and he now is in his brother's power. Fly then to his aid! Alas! perhaps at this moment his destruction is completed! perhaps even now Osmond's dagger—

Per. Within there! Allan! Harold!—quick, Gilbert, sound your horn!—(*Motley sounds it.—it is echoed, L.H.*)

Enter ALLAN, EDRIC, HAROLD, and soldiers, L.H.

Per. Friends, may I depend on your support?

Har. While we breathe, all will stand by you!

Soldiers. All! All!

Per. Follow me then—away!

Ken. Yet stay one moment!—Percy, to this grateful friend have I confided a master-key, which will instantly admit you to the castle, and have described to him the retreat of Reginald!—Be he your guide, and hasten—Oh! that pang! (*He faints; Allan and Edric support him.*)

Per. Look to him! He sinks! Bear him to your hut, Edric, and there tend his hurts (*To Saib.*)—Now on good fellow, and swiftly!—Osmond, despair! I come! (*Exit, with Saib, Motley, Harold, and soldiers, R.H. over the bridge, while Allan and Edric convey away Kenric still fainting, L.H.*)

SCENE II.—*A vaulted Chamber.*

Enter FATHER PHILIP, R.H. with a Basket on his Arm and a Torch, conducting ANGELA.

F. Phil. Thanks to St. Francis, we have as yet

passed unobserved!—Surely, of all travelling companions, fear is the least agreeable: I could'nt be more fatigued, had I run twenty miles without stopping!

Ang. Why this delay?—Good father, let us proceed.

F. Phil. Ere I can go further, lady, I must needs stop to take breath, and refresh my spirits with a taste of this cordial. (*Taking a bottle from the basket.*)

Ang. Oh! not now! Wait till we are safe under Percy's protection, and then drink as you list. But not now, father; in pity, not now!

F. Phil. Well, well, be calm, daughter!—Oh! these women! these women! They mind no one's comfort but their own!—Now, where is the door?

Ang. How tedious seems every moment which I pass within these hated walls!—Ha! Yonder comes a light!

F. Phil. So, so—I've found it at last. (*Touching a spring, a secret door flies open.*)

Ang. It moves this way!—By all my fears, 'tis Osmond!—In, father, in! Away, for heaven's sake!

[*Exeunt, M.D. closing the door after them.*]

Enter OSMOND and HASSAN with a Torch, R.H.

Osm. (*After a pause of gloomy meditation.*) Is all still within the castle?

Has. As the silence of the grave.

Osm. Where are your fellows?

Has. Saib guards the traitor Kenric: Muley and Alarie are buried in sleep.

Osm. Their hands have been stained with blood, and yet can they sleep?—Call your companions hither. (*Hassan offers to leave the torch.*) Away with the light! Its beams are hateful! [*Erit Hassan, R.H.*]

Osm. Yes! this is the place. If Kenric said true, for sixteen years have the vaults beneath me rung with my brother's groans. I dread to unclose the door! How shall I sustain the beams of his eye, when they rest on Evelina's murderer? Ha! at that name my

expiring hate revives! Reginald! Reginald! for thee was I sacrificed! Oh! when it strikes a second blow, my poniard shall stab surer!

Enter HASSAN, MULEY, and ALARIC, R.H. with Torches.

The Africans. (Together.) My lord? My lord!

Osm. Now, why this haste?

Has. I tremble to inform you, that Saib has fled the castle. A master-key, which he found upon Kenric, and of which he kept possession, has enabled him to escape.

Osm. Saib too gone?—All are false! All forsake me!

Has. Yet more, my lord; he has made his prisoner the companion of his flight.

Osm. (Starting.) How? Kenric escaped?

Ala. 'Tis but too certain; doubtless he has fled to Percy.

Osm. To Percy?—Ha! Then I must be speedy: my fate hangs on a thread! Friends, I have ever found ye faithful; mark me now! (*Opening the private door.*) Of these two passages, the left conducts to a long chain of dungeons: in one of these my brother still languishes. Once already have you seen him bleeding beneath my sword—but he yet exists. My fortune, my love, nay my life, are at stake!—Need I say more! (*Each half unsheathes his sword.*)—That gesture speaks me understood. On then before, I follow you. (*The Africans pass through the private door: Osmond is advancing towards it, when he suddenly starts back.*)—Ha! Why roll these seas of blood before me? Whose mangled corse do they bear to my feet?—Patriicide?—Oh! 'tis a dreadful name!—Yet how preserve myself and Reginald?—It cannot be! We must not breathe the same atmosphere.—Fate, thy hand urges me!—Fate, thy voice prompts me! Thou hast spoken; I obey. (*He follows the Africans; the door is closed after him.*)

SCENE III.—*A gloomy subterraneous Dungeon, wide and lofty: the upper Part of it has in several places fallen in, and left large Chasms. On one Side are various Passages leading to other Caverns: on the other is an Iron Door with Steps leading to it, and a Wicket in the Middle. REGINALD, pale and emaciated, in coarse Garments, his Hair hanging wildly about his Face, and a Chain bound round his Body, lies sleeping upon a Bed of Straw. A Lamp, a small Basket, and a Pitcher, are placed near him. After a few Moments he awakes, and extends his Arms.*

Reg. My child! My Evelina!—Oh! fly me not, lovely forms!—They are gone, and once more I live to misery.—Thou wert kind to me, sleep! Even now, methought, I sat in my castle-hall: a maid, lovely as the queen of fairies, hung on my knee, and hailed me by that sweet name, “Father!” Yes, I was happy!—Yet frown not on me, therefore, darkness! I am thine again, my gloomy bride!—Be not incensed, despair, that I left thee for a moment; I have passed with thee sixteen years! Ah! how many have I still to pass?—Yet fly not my bosom quite, sweet hope! Still speak to me of liberty, of light! Whisper, that once more I shall see the morn break, that again shall my fevered lips drink the pure gale of evening! God, thou know’st that I have borne my sufferings meekly: I have wept for myself, but never cursed my foes; I have sorrowed for thy anger, but never murmured at thy will. Patient have I been; oh! then reward me; let me once again press my daughter in my arms; let me, for one instant, feel again that I clasp to my heart a being who loves me. Speed thou to heaven, prayer of a captive! (*He sinks upon a stone, with his hands clasped, and his eyes bent stedfastly upon the flame of the lamp.*)

ANGELA and FATHER PHILIP are seen through the Chasms above, passing slowly.

Ang. Be cautious, father!—Feel you not how the ground trembles beneath us?

F. Phil. Perfectly well; and would give my best breviary to find myself once more on terra-firma. But the outlet cannot be far off: let us proceed.

Ang. Look down upon us, blessed angels! Aid us! Protect us!

F. Phil. Amen, fair daughter! (*They disappear.*)

Reg. (*After a pause.*) How wastes my lamp? The hour of Kenric's visit must long be past, and still he comes not. How, if death's hand hath struck him suddenly? My existence unknown—Away from my fancy, dreadful idea! (*Rising, and taking the lamp.*) The breaking of my chain permits me to wander at large through the wide precincts of my prison. Haply the late storm, whose pealing thunders were heard e'en in this abyss, may have rent some friendly chasm: haply some nook yet unexplored—Ah! no, no, no! My hopes are vain, my search will be fruitless. Despair in these dungeons reigns despotic; she mocks my complaints, rejects my prayers, and, when I sue for freedom, bids me seek it in my grave!—Death! Oh! death! how welcome wilt thou be to me!

[*Exit R.H.U.E.*

(*The noise is heard of a heavy bar falling; the door opens.*)

Enter FATHER PHILIP and ANGELA, L.H.S.E.

F. Phil. How's this? A door?

Ang. It was barred on the outside.

F. Phil. That we'll forgive, as it was'nt bolted on the in. But I don't recollect—Surely I've not——

Ang. What's the matter?

F. Phil. By my faith, daughter, I suspect that I've missed my way.

Ang. Heaven forbid!

F. Phil. Nay, if 'tis so, I shan't be the first man who of two ways has preferred the wrong.

Ang. Provoking! And did I not tell you to chuse the right-hand passage!

F. Phil. Truly, did you; and that was the very thing which made me chuse the left. Whenever I am in doubt myself, I generally ask a woman's advice. When she's of one way of thinking, I've always found that reason's on the other. In this instance, perhaps, I have been mistaken: but wait here for one moment, and the fact shall be ascertained. [*Exit R.H.S.E.*]

Ang. How thick and infectious is the air of this cavern! Yet perhaps for sixteen years has my poor father breathed none purer. Hark! Steps are quick advancing! The friar comes, but why in such confusion?

Re-enter FATHER PHILIP, running, R.H.S.E.

F. Phil. Help! help! it follows me!

Ang. (*Detaining him.*) What alarms you? Speak!

F. Phil. His ghost! his ghost!—Let me go!—let me go!—let me go! (*Struggling to escape from Angela, he falls and extinguishes the torch; then hastily rises, and rushes up the stair-case, closing the door after him.*)

Ang. Father! Father! Stay, for heaven's sake! —He's gone! I cannot find the door!—Hark! 'Twas the clank of chains!—A light too! It comes yet nearer!—Save me, ye powers!—What dreadful form! 'Tis here! I faint with terror! (*Sinks almost lifeless against the dungeon's side.*)

Re-enter REGINALD with a Lamp, R.H.S.E.

Reg. (*Placing his lamp upon a pile of stones.*) Why did Kenric enter my prison. Haply, when he heard not my groans at the dungeon door, he thought that my woes were relieved by death! Oh! when will that thought be verified? Thou art dead, and at rest,

my wife! Safe in yon skies, no thought of me molests thy quiet. Yet sure I wrong thee! At the hour of death thy spirit shall stand beside me, shall close mine eyes gently, and murmur, "Die, Reginald, and be at peace!"

Ang. Hark! Heard I not—Pardon, good stranger—

Reg. (*Starting wildly from his seat.*) 'Tis she! She comes for me! Is the hour at hand, fair vision? Spirit of Evelina, lead on, I follow thee! (*He extends his arms towards her, staggers a few paces forwards, then sinks exhausted on the ground.*)

Ang. He faints! perhaps expires!—Still, still! See, he revives!

Reg. 'Tis gone! Once more the sport of my bewildered brain! (*Starting up.*) Powers of bliss! Look, where it moves again! Oh! say, what art thou? If Evelina, speak, oh speak!

Ang. Ha! Named he not Evelina? That look! This dungeon too! The emotions which his voice—It is, it must be! Father! Oh! Father! Father! (*Falling upon his bosom.*)

Reg. Said you? Meant you? My daughter—my infant, whom I left—Oh! yes, it must be true! My heart, which springs towards you, acknowledges my child! (*Embracing her.*) But say, how gained you entrance? Has Osmond—

Ang. Oh! that name recalls my terrors! Alas! you see in me a fugitive from his violence! Guided by a friendly monk, whom your approach has frightened from me. I was endeavouring to escape: we missed our way, and chance guided us to this dungeon. But this is not a time for explanation. Answer me! Know you the subterraneous passages belonging to this castle?

Reg. Whose entrance is without the walls? I do.

Ang. Then we may yet be saved! Father, we must fly this moment. Percy, the pride of our English youth, waits for me at the Conway's side. Come then, oh come! Stay not one moment longer. (*As she approaches the door, lights appear above.*)

Reg. Look ! look, my child ! The beams of distant torches flash through the gloom !

Osm. (*Above.*) Hassan, guard you the door.— Follow me, my friends. (*The lights disappear.*)

Ang. Osmond's voice ? Undone ! Undone ! Oh ! my father ! he comes to seek you, perhaps to——

Reg. Hark ! they come ! The gloom of yonder cavern may awhile conceal you : fly to it : hide yourself : stir not, I charge you.

Ang. What, leave you ? Oh ! no, no !

Reg. Dearest, I entreat, I conjure you, fly ! Fear not for me !

Ang. Father ! Oh ! father !

Reg. Farewell ! perhaps for ever ! (*He forces Angela into the cavern, then returns hastily, and throws himself on the bed of straw.*) Now then to hear my doom !

Enter OSMOND, L.H.S.E. followed by MULEY and ALARIC with Torches.

Osm. The door unbarred ? Softly, my fears were false ! Lo ! where stretched on the ground, a stone his pillow, he tastes that repose which flies from my bed of down ! Wake, Reginald, and arise !

Reg. You here, Osmond ? What brings you to this scene of sorrow ? Alas ! hope flies while I gaze upon your frowning eye ! Have I read its language aright, Osmond ?

Osm. Aright, if you have read my hatred.

Reg. Have I deserved that hate ? See, my brother, the once proud Reginald lies at your feet, for his pride has been humbled by suffering ! Hear him adjure you by her ashes, within whose bosom we both have lain, not to stain your hands with the blood of your brother ! Kenric has told me that my daughter lives ! Restore me to her arms : permit us in obscurity to pass our days together ! Then shall my last sigh implore upon your head heaven's forgiveness, and Evelina's.

Osm. He melts me in my own despite. It shall be so. Rise, Reginald, and hear me! You mentioned even now your daughter: know, she is in my power; know, also, that I love her!

Reg. How?

Osm. She rejects my offers. Your authority can oblige her to accept them. Swear to use it, and this instant will I lead you to her arms. Say will you give the demanded oath?

Reg. I cannot dissemble: Osmond, I never will.

Osm. How?—Reflect that your life——

Reg. Would be valueless, if purchased by my daughter's tears; would be loathsome if embittered by my daughter's misery. Osmond, I will not take the oath.

Osm. (*Almost choked with passion.*) 'Tis enough! (*To the Africans.*) You know your duty! Drag him to yonder cavern! Let me not see him die!

Reg. (*Holding by a fragment of the wall, from which the Africans strive to force him.*) Brother, for pity's sake! for your soul's happiness!

Osm. Obey me, slaves! Away!

ANGELA rushes in wildly.

Ang. Hold off! Hurt him not! He is my father!

Osm. Angela here?

Reg. Daughter, what means——

Ang. (*Embracing him.*) You shall live, father! I will sacrifice all to preserve you. Osmond, release my father, and solemnly I swear——

Reg. Hold, girl, and first hear me! (*Kneeling.*) God of nature, to thee I call! If e'er on Osmond's bosom a child of mine rests; if e'er she calls him husband who pierced her hapless mother's heart, that moment shall a wound, by my own hand inflicted——

Ang. Hold! Oh! hold---End not your oath!

Osm. I burn with rage!

Ang. I swear!

Reg. Be repaid by this embrace!

Osm. Be it your last! Tear them asunder! Ha! what noise?

Enter HASSAN, hatily, L.H.S.E.

Has. My lord, all is lost ! Percy has surprised the castle, and speeds this way !

Osm. Confusion ! Then I must be sudden. Aid me, Hassan ! (*Hassan and Osmond force Angela from her father, who suddenly disengages himself from Muley and Alaric.*)

Reg. Friends so near ? Villains ! at least you shall buy my life dearly ! (*Suddenly seizing Hassan's sword.*)

Osm. (*Employed with Hassan in retaining Angela, while Reginald defends himself against Muley and Alaric.*) Down with him ! Wrest the sword from him ! (*Alaric is wounded, and falls ; Muley gives back ; at the same time Osmond's party appears above, pursued by Percy's.*) Hark ! they come !—Dastardly villains !—Nay then my own hand must— (*Drawing his sword, he rushes upon Reginald, who is disarmed, and beaten upon his knees ; when at the moment that Osmond lifts his arm to stab him, Erelin's Ghost throws herself between them : Osmond starts back, and drops his sword.*)—Angela disengaging herself from Hassan, she springs suddenly forwards, and plunges her dagger in Osmond's bosom, who falls with a loud groan, and faints. The Ghost vanishes : Angela and Reginald rush into each other's arms.)

Ang. Father, thou art mine again !

Enter PERCY, SAMB, HAROLD, &c. L.H.S.H. pursuing OSMOND'S Party—They all stop on seeing him bleeding upon the ground.

Per. Hold, my brave friends !—See where lies the object of our search !

Ang. Percy !—Dear Percy ?

Per. (*Flying to her.*) Dearest Angela !

Ang. My friend, my guardian angel ! Come, Percy,

come ! embrace my father ! Father, embrace the protector of your child !

Per. Do I then behold earl Reginald ?

Reg. (*Embracing him.*) The same, brave Percy ! Welcome to my heart ! Live ever next it.

Ang. Oh, moment that o'erpays my sufferings !— And yet—Percy, that wretched man—He perished by my hand ! (*Osmond is conveyed away : Servants enter with torches, and the Stage becomes light.*)

Per. But say, fair Angela, what have I to hope ? Is my love approved by your noble father ? Will he—

Reg. Percy, this is no time to talk of love. Let me hasten to my expiring brother, and soften with forgiveness the pangs of death !

Per. And can you forget your sufferings ?

Reg. Ah ! youth, has he had none ? Oh ! in his stately chambers, far greater must have been his pangs than mine in this gloomy dungeon ; for what gave me comfort was his terror, what gave me hope was his despair.

*And, Oh, thou wretch ! whom hopeless woes oppress,
Whose days no joys, whose nights no slumbers bless,
When pale despair alarms thy phrensied eye,
Screams in thine ear, and bids thee heav'n deny,
Court thou religion ! strive thy faith to save ;
Bend thy fix'd glance on bliss beyond the grave ;
Hush guilty murmurs ! banish dark mistrust !
Think, there's a power above, nor doubt that power
is just !*

Disposition of the Characters when the Curtain falls.



EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. JORDAN.

OSMOND by this arrived at Charon's ferry,
My honour saved, and dad alive and merry;
Hither I come the public doom to know,
But come not uncompell'd—the more's my woe !
E'en now, (oh ! pity, friends, my hard mishap !)
My shoulder felt a Bow-street runner's tap,
Who, while I shook with fear in every limb,
'Thus spoke, with accent stern, and visage grim—

“ Mistress !” quoth he, “ to me it given in trust is,
To bring you straight before our larned justice ;
For, know, 'tis said, to-night, the whole town o'er,
You've kill'd one Osmond, alias Barrymore.—

“ The fellow's mad ! 'twas thus amaz'd, I spoke ;
Lord, sir ! I murder'd Osmond for a joke.
This dagger, free from blood, will make it certain,
He died but till the prompter dropp'd the curtain ;
And now, well pleas'd to quit this scene of riot,
The man's gone home to sup in peace and quiet ”
Finding that all I said was said in vain,
And Townshend still his first design maintain,
I thought 'twere best to fly for shelter here,
And beg my generous friends to interfere.
But though the awkward nature of my case
May spread some slight confusion o'er my face,
No terrors awe my bosom, I'll assure ye ;
Just is my cause, and English is my jury !
Besides, it must appear, on explanation,
How very ticklish was my situation,
And all perforce, his crimes when I relate,
Must own that Osmond well deserv'd his fate.

EPILOGUE.

He heeded not papa's pathetic pleading ;
He stabb'd mamma—which was extreme ill-breeding ;
And at his feet for mercy when I sued,
The odious wretch, I vow, was downright rude.
Twice his bold hands my person dared to touch !
Twice in one day !—'Twas really once too much !
And therefore justly fill'd with virtuous ire,
To save my honour, and protect my sire,
I drew my knife, and in his bosom stuck it ;
He fell, you clapp'd—and then he kick'd the bucket !

So perish still the wretch, whose soul can know
Selfish delight, while causing others woe ;
Who blasts that joy, the sweetest God has given,
And makes an hell, where love would make an heaven !
Forbear, thou lawless libertine ! nor seek
Forc'd favours on that pale averted cheek :
If thy warm kisses cost bright eyes one tear,
Kisses from loveliest lips are bought too dear—
Unless those lips with thine keep playful measure,
And that sweet tear should be a tear of pleasure !
Now as for Osmond—at that villain's name
I feel reviving wrath my soul inflame !
And shall one short and sudden pang suffice
To clear so base a fault, so gross a vice ?
No ; to your bar, dear friends, for aid I fly !
Bid Osmond live again, again to die ;
Nightly with plaudits loud his breath recall,
Nightly beneath my dagger see him fall,
Give him a thousand lives—and let me take them all !

Orberry's Edition.

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A MELO-DRAME:

IN THREE ACTS.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY MARKED WITH
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THE Author of the “Woodman’s Hut,” acknowledges, with many thanks, the effective exertions of the Performers in this Melodrame.

At the same time, without the remotest intention of making any invidious distinction, he begs leave to dedicate it to

MISS KELLY,

as a sincere mark of his admiration of her talents, and of his high respect for the virtues which so eminently distinguish her character in private life.

April, 18, 1814.

Remarks.

MODERN ingenuity has invented a royal road to wisdom, or at least to the reputation of it; nothing can be more simple to the understanding, or less laborious in the practice; all that is requisite to this end is the profession of utter contempt for the writers of the day, and the use of a few mystical phrases, which, as they have no meaning, are allowed to pass for metaphysics;—German-horrors, melo-dramatic horrors, melo-drama, classic purity, and a few similar phrases, which may be learned by the perusal of Blackwood's Magazine, Mr. Phipps's News, and the Champion; armed with these any lady or gentleman is fully competent to the task of criticism, and entitled to look down with contempt on modern authors. The best weapon for ignorance is contempt; it is at once its shield and its spear, its armour of defence and its weapon of annoyance. To be pleased with what pleases the many is to be of the many, as on the contrary to despise their amusements is to be above them. For our own credit, therefore, we ought to write "*Naso adunco*" upon melo-drama; but we are not ambitious, and even were we so, we have worn out too much of life in study to court the opinion of learning by fostering the prejudices of ignorance: to our shame be it said, we have often been amused by melo-drama, and are prepared to offer a few unpalatable truths in its defence.

Melo-drama is either founded on a simple domestic fable, whether true or feigned, or is pure romance, or lastly combines the two. The first sort comes as near to real life as any dramatic composition can do; its music is not more remote from nature than the blank verse or the rhymes of tragedy, and if it err in having too much action, it has a counterbalancing advantage in not being clogged by excess of speech; in fact the music supplies the place of language,

and though the expressions of music are not so nicely marked, still in conjunction with action, the purport of the scene is easy to be understood.

Whatever effect is to be produced, whether terror or pathos, melo-drama depends upon the strength of incident. It places characters in striking situations, leaving the situations to tell for themselves, and carefully avoids encumbering them with language; this necessity of producing great effects, no doubt sometimes leads to the most monstrous anomalies, but we do not speak of these abuses; we treat of melo-drama as it should be, and as it is in the best models.

The great fault of this species of writing is, that it only aims at producing excitement without offering any food to the understanding; it neither exalts nor refines the imagination; like a dream it leaves no impression behind it; when it is over it is forgotten; it has stamped nothing on the mind by which it is the wiser or the better. Still it affords amusement without offending the understanding, and to more than this it does not pretend; it is at all events superior to farce, which is nothing better than a monstrous caricature for the most part, the only object of which is to excite an idiot laugh. Both, however, are very well in their places, that is as a desert to tragedy or comedy; melo-drama is not, indeed, substantial food on which the mind can be nourished, but it is a light pleasant repast to the imagination.

Much nonsense has been solemnly urged against the unnatural jumble of music, comedy and tragedy, which the wise men of Gotham suppose to make up melo-drama. But it surely does not need argument to prove that no combination is unnatural, the several parts of which are in harmony, and all tending to the same result; that union only is to be condemned, which has its parts opposed to each other, thus mutually counteracting the proposed effects. To say that we do not act to music in real life is to say nothing; neither do we act to recitative as in opera—or speak in blank verse as in tragedy—or point every speech like an epigram, as in the most approved modern comedy; but thus it is, and thus it always will be, when folly puts on the gravity of wisdom, and lends itself to censure; it never will see beyond the surface.

We have said that the melo-drama, founded on domestic history

or dramatic fiction, approaches nearest to reality ; still we prefer that kind which unites the romantic with the domestic ; the fancy is thus gratified, and enough of truth may still be preserved ; there is a richness, a luxuriance in romance, which, when properly and skillfully employed, is uncommonly effective, as on the contrary by any excess in its use it becomes disgusting.

The "Woodman's Hut" is of this latter class, but leaning perhaps a little too much on the side of the romantic. The story is arranged with great skill and dexterity ; no incident is delayed or hurried beyond the precise moment of effect ; the interest is regularly but quickly wrought up, until it ends in a climax that has not often been surpassed. There is too much antecedent matter related in the first scenes, too much story-telling, but even this defect is so ably covered by the neatness of the language, and the spirit of the detail that it is little felt, and may easily be forgiven.

That the excellence of this little piece entitled it to all its brilliant success is undeniable ; the mind of the ingenious author was more than equal to the task ; but at the same time, it must be confessed, that this as well as many other melo-dramas owed its permanent attraction to the exquisite acting of Miss Kelly ; indeed it is her peculiar genius that has, in some measure, given rise to this class of melo-drama, nothing can equal her in the tragedy of low life ; so much has been proved beyond the power of denial ; but we do not hesitate to say that her excellence would be as conspicuous in the higher walks of the drama, and it is only to be regretted that a modest distrust of her own genius withholds her from the trial.



Costume.

COUNT CONENBERG.

Brown cloth Romaldi tunick, lined with blue sarsenet; blue satin waistcoat; white worsted pantaloons, embroidered; and russet boots.

WERTHER.

Light blue serge Romaldi tunick; orange coloured waistcoat; blue pantaloons; and russet boots.

WOLFENDER.

Black cloth Romaldi tunick; black worsted pantaloons, with scarlet trimming; and russet boots.

KAUNITZ.

Drab serge Romaldi tunick, red trimming; red pantaloons; and russet boots.

DANGERFELDT.

Light drab tunick, orange binding; orange coloured waistcoat; black trunks; flesh-coloured pantaloons; and russet boots.

SCHAMPT.

Grey tunick, with green binding; grey pantaloons; and russet boots.

BRUHL.

A dark doublet, with brown binding; brown small-clothes, and stockings; brown cloth waistcoat; and russet shoes.

MORITZ.

Drab jacket, and small clothes; blue stockings; orange-coloured waistcoat; brown hat; and russet shoes.

AMELIA.

Grey cloth petticoat; green cloth short petticoat and body, trimmed with black velvet, and buttons, white long sleeves and tucker; small brown satin bonnet; yellow half boots; coloured sash.

MARIA.

Yellow cloth petticoat; brown cloth petticoat; short dress, white tucker and sleeves; coloured sash; grey half-boots.

LAURA.

Pink petticoat; brown cloth body; blue apron, trimmed with brown; coloured sash; white tucker and sleeves; blue half boots.

Persons Represented.

<i>Drury-lane.</i>	<i>Lyceum.</i>
<i>Ferdinand Count Conenberg,</i> (<i>Nephew to the late Count,</i> <i>and inheriting his title and</i> <i>domain.</i>)	Mr. Penley.
<i>Werther, his Friend.</i>	Mr. Crooke.
<i>Wolfender, (the esquire and</i> <i>emissary of Baron Hern-</i> <i>hausen)</i>	Mr. Barnard.
<i>Kaunitz,</i> } <i>His Comrades..</i>	Mr. Wallack.
<i>Dangerfeldt,</i> }	Mr. Chatterley.
<i>Schampt,</i> }	Mr. Smith.
<i>Moritz, a Gardener at the</i> <i>Castle</i>	Mr. Oxberry.
<i>Bruhl (a Woodcutter in the</i> <i>Forest</i>	Mr. Gattie.
<i>Servant</i>	Mr. Evans.
<i>Amelia (Daughter to the late</i> <i>Count Conenberg)</i>	Miss Kelly.
<i>Maria (her Foster-sister)</i>	Miss Cooke.
<i>Laura (an Attendant)</i>	Miss Ivers.

Mr. T. Short.
Mr. I. Jones.
Mr. L. Lee.
Mr. Huckle.
Mr. Salter.
Mr. I. Isaacs.
Mr. Wilkinson.
Mr. Chatterley.
Mr. Evans.
Miss Kelly.
Miss C. Lancaster.
Miss Love.

The time this piece takes in representation is about one hour and fifty minutes. The first act occupies the space of twenty-five minutes—the second, forty—the third, forty-five.

Stage Directions.

By R. H.	is meant.	Right Hand.
L. H.		Left Hand.
S. E.		Second Entrance.
U. E.		Upper Entrance.
M. D.		Middle Door.
D. F.		Door in Flat.
R. H. D.		Right Hand Door.
L. H. D.		Left Hand Door.

THE WOODMAN'S HUT,

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Before the Castle of Count Conenberg.
A distant view of the River and the Castle of
Baron Hernhausen.*

Enter MORITZ and LAURA, R.H.

Mor. Well, well ;—be patient and you shall hear all about it.

Lau. The question is, why the young lord Ferdinand, nephew to our late master, the count of Conenberg, has taken possession of this castle and estate ?

Mor. Well, you must know, that about five years ago—

Lau. Yes—

Mor. Our powerful and terrible neighbour, the Baron Hernhausen—

Lau. Aye ! the great baron who lives yonder, on the other side the river, in the Black Castle, as 'tis called.

Mor. Hush ! silence !—he hears every thing—he has secret emissaries every where, and spies in every house in Bohemia ; therefore be silent.

Lau. I am mute ; provided you'll talk, and go on with your story.

Mor. I will.—A war of nearly twenty years had been

waged between the family of Hernhausen and that of our late master, the count of Conenberg, who died seven months ago. The chance of war had left the count at the mercy of this haughty baron, who demanded, as the price of peace, his only daughter, the lovely Amelia, in marriage. This young creature, then only fifteen years old, shuddered at the thoughts of marriage with a man, whom she had been taught to detest—

Lau. I don't wonder at it—I should have done just the same.

Mor. But the good count, in order to save his dependants and their families from the further ravages of war, urged her to accept the hand of his conqueror.

Lau. Aye! that's the way with all your tyrannical fathers.

Mor. She refused, and he commanded—'till at last, driven to despair, as was supposed, she suddenly left the castle, and has never since been heard of.—Pshaw! There's some strangers accidentally passing by the castle.—And now, as they are gone, let us have a little quiet chat.

Lau. Chat!—about what, Mr. Moritz?

Mor. About my love for you, ye little gypsey.

Lau. Lord, Moritz! you know 'tis no use talking to me of love:—all you ought to think of is the war which we are going to engage in.

Mor. I've a good place as gardener here, and my uncle, old Bruhl, who contracts for the wood-cutting in the great forest yonder, is rich, and I am to be his heir; so no fear that we shall be able to live happily, and provide for all our children, though heaven should bless us with a dozen or two.

Lau. For shame, Moritz! I vow you frighten one out of one's wits.

SONG.—LAURA.

*Oh never say I stole the heart
Which you so freely gave;
For sooner should the truant part,
Than stay to be my slave.
Yet ne'er would I a gift receive,
Or valued love obtain,
If forced, your passion to relieve,
To give it back again.*

*But as your heart you gave to me,
Ere yet you knew 'twas flown,
I could not let you heartless be,
So gave you back my own:
For never could this bosom play
So treacherous a part,
As suffer mine with yours to stay,
To bear a double heart!*

Mor. Well, now it's all settled—we'll be married to-morrow.

Lau. Lord now—I declare you bring my heart up into my mouth.

Mor. Do I?—then as I love your heart, as a right good one, I'll make you shut your mouth, for fear you should lose it. (*Kisses her.*)

Lau. So—there I vow are the strangers again! and they've seen you kissing me. I shall never be able to look you in the face again; so if you have any more to say, you must follow me into the castle.

[*Exit LAURA, L.H.*

Mor. And so I will; and when the strangers can't see us, I'll have the fellow to that kiss, or know a good reason why not. (*Music.*) [*Exit after her.*

*Enter WOLFENDER, KAUNITZ, and SCHAMPT,
watching, R.H.U.E.*

Wolf. Step cautiously—I think those people of the castle have perceived us.—Kaunitz, is all ready?

Kaun. Aye, I warrant; we are no sluggards.

Wolf. I know not that. For five years you have reposed in sluggish idleness, from which it is high time you should be roused.

Scham. For my part, I verily believe my sword has grown rusty in its scabbard.

Wolf. Make yourself easy; you will soon have occasion to rub the rust off.

Kaun. What is your plan?

Wolf. This young count has had the audacity to declare war on the baron: but as our master finds he can ill support this unexpected warfare, we are to surprise the young count, and bear him prisoner to our lord's castle.

Scham. Pshaw! that's a childish scheme—'twill be impossible!

Wolf. Impossible! nothing so easy. You both assisted me in the seizure of the young and beautiful Amelia five years ago.

Kaun. True:—though unfortunately in three days she contrived to escape, and has never since been heard of.

Scham. If we may believe a letter she wrote a few days after her flight, it is probable that she destroyed herself, from fear of again falling into his hands.—But come, let us hear your intentions.

Wolf. You remember the grotto in the garden of the castle—

Kaun. We have good reason to remember it, for 'twas from that very place we carried off the girl. At the end of the grotto is a subterranean passage, which leads without the walls, through which we conveyed her.

Wolf. That subterranean passage will again answer

our purpose. We will hasten on our pretended mission to the count, and it shall be my business to lure him to the spot. You will lie concealed in the grotto, as before, and our scheme will be accomplished without noise or danger.

Kaun. One difficulty strikes me.

Wolf. What is it?

Kaun. You are aware that there is only a slender foot-bridge across the river, which divides the estate of the baron from that of the count; and we shall be obliged to conduct our prisoner on foot, four long leagues through the forest.

Wolf. I have thought of that:—have you not observed a small cottage which stands on the other side of the river?

Scham. I recollect it well.

Wolf. It is inhabited by an old woman, and her two daughters. At that lonely house we will pass the night with our prisoner; and early in the morning, the carriage and escort which I have appointed will arrive.

Kaun. Aye, aye; nothing can be better planned.—Let us to our work.

Wolf. Steal softly, friends; when we are once admitted, and pass unobserved, if possible, to your lurking-place: then, at the proper moment, we'll fall on him like a thunderbolt, bear him off like freebooters, and receive our promised reward, like honest gentlemen. [*Exeunt*, L.H.

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Castle.*

Enter Count FERDINAND and WERTHER, R.H.

Wer. My dear count, I am resolved not to leave you till I learn why, instead of the joy natural on obtaining this great estate—

Count F. A prey to a hopeless passion, the increase of wealth and honour has but still further removed me from the object I adore.

Wer. So ! Love ! I thought I knew the symptoms. Come, come :—Who is this unknown charmer, who has so suddenly robbed you of your senses ?

Count F. You remember that some days past, I left the castle on horseback, to revisit the romantic spots around us. Which I have not seen since my childhood. Alone, and regardless of the way, I was soon lost in the forest.

Wer. Yes, I remember your absence frightened all the females of the family out of their wits.

Count F. At length, worn with fatigue, I reached the banks of a river. On the other side I perceived a lone cottage, and at a little distance from me a boat. Having tied my horse to a tree, I was on the point of entering that boat, when my steps were suddenly arrested by the cries of a young female.—Heavens ! how lovely an object burst upon my sight ! never did I behold a form so beautiful, so interesting.

Wer. Aye, these solitary damsels in woods, are always interesting to us young gentlemen.

Count F. “What will become of me ?” said she, in the mildest tone of entreaty ; “What will become of me, if you deprive me of the means of regaining the opposite bank ? Night approaches ; I shall be left alone in this forest, and my poor mother will die with grief !”

Wer. Very pathetic, indeed !

Count F. Oh ! my dear Werther, I cannot express to you what I felt. Motionless, mute, my eyes were fixed on her's, burning with all the fire of love.

Wer. Poor Ferdinand !

Count F. Alarmed at my appearance, she was on the point of escaping by flight, when I took her hand, and detained her. By degrees, my words calmed her fears, and gained her confidence.—“I live with my widowed mother,” said this angelic creature, “in that cottage, which you see on the other side of the river : my name is Caroline Blomfeldt, and I have been seeking plants, from which my mother extracts remedies for the sick poor of the neighbouring hamlet.”

Wer. Yes, I understand—a sort of village doctress, who cures all complaints by amulets, and charms, and simples, gathered by moonlight!

Count F. Nay, do not banter. I have little more to add.—She said she trembled at the dangers which threatened me, at that late hour—pointed out to me the road which would bring me to the plain, and bade heaven conduct and guard me in safety! I offered her my ring, as a token of gratitude, which, perceiving she was about to refuse, I threw it at her feet, and hastening from her, left my heart, my happiness behind me.

Wer. And your ring. Alas! poor count—I pity you! So then you have really fallen in love with a simple peasant girl, without a name, without fortune—Oh! I beg pardon, she has a name—Caroline Blomfeldt.

Enter SERVANT, L.H.

Serv. My lord, there are strangers who inquire for your lordship.

Count F. Strangers?

Serv. Yes, my lord. They say their business presses, and beg an immediate audience. They will not enter the castle, but have walked by the ramparts, and descended to the garden.

Count F. I attend them. (*Crosses L.H.—Exit Serv.*) Doubtless, some messengers from the baron Hernhausen—to him I have sent the mortal defiance of our injured and insulted family. Though love reigns absolute in my heart, it is still obedient to the calls of honour. Come, my friend, let what will engage my thoughts for a time, the image of my lovely cottager will still return, and wean them from every other object.

[*Exeunt, L.H.*

SCENE III.—*The Garden of the Castle; on L.H. the Entrance to a Grotto. Enter KAUNITZ and SCHAMPT, very cautiously looking around, R.H.U.E.*

Kaun. There is no time now for hesitation.

(Goes to the Grotto.)

Give me your cloak. Make haste and open the secret door, that leads into the subterraneous passage—you recollect?

Scham. I do.

(Crosses to Grotto, L.H.)

Kaun. Away, then; yonder see the count and Wolfender. They come this way.

(They secrete themselves in the Grotto, L.H.)

Enter MORITZ, cautiously, R.H.

Mor. It is as I expected! Those villains plan some desperate blow against the count. Which way to seek him? I'll e'en to the castle, and alarm the guards, apprize them of their danger, and secure these ruffians in their den.

[Exit towards the Castle, L.H.U.E.]

Enter COUNT and WOLFENDER, L.H.

Wolf. For the last time, I ask the lord of this domain, my answer.

Count F. My only answer to your perfidious master is the expression of my deep contempt, and everlasting cunity.

Wolf. So bold and haughty still, my lord!

Count F. Aye! bold in the cause of justice! Withered be the arm that hesitates to strike against a treacherous, remorseless tyrant. Though heaven, for a time, permits the lawless depredator to oppress, as it sometimes sends forth the pestilence, a scourge of human kind, still, at its own wise hour, relenting mercy hears a

people's prayers, and hurls the despot from ambition's height, a terrible example to the world.

(*Crosses to L.H.*)

Wolf. 'Tis not for me, my lord, to cope in argument on matters high as these. My lord, the baron has commissioned me alone, to urge the revocation of your bold defiance.

Count F. Never! Away! and bid him thank the lenity which sends back his messenger without some marks of my indignant chastisement. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Wolf. My lord, with all humility, I ask the cause of your defiance; on what plea—

Count F. Then tell him this the cause. 'Tis known to me that my fair cousin, the young and beautiful Amelia, was, by his insolent and daring hand, seized e'en within this castle's walls, when, like a midnight thief, he stole upon her, and bore his innocent and lovely victim a prisoner to his castle, where she, in secret, died.

Wolf. Had this been so—

Count F. Had it been so!—it was so; and, or my good intelligence has failed, thou wert an infamous and hateful instrument in that foul deed. Ha! dost thou tremble, ruffian? By heaven, I read upon thy guilty face confession of the crime. If thou would'st hope for mercy at my hands, or to return with life to thy employer, confess! or tortures shall extract the truth.

(*During this Dialogue, the Party appear from the Grotto attentive; Wolfender, seeing his danger, looks around him, and exchanges signs with them.*)

Wolf. Oh, noble count, with patience hear me! I am a poor dependant on my master—bound to obey him as becomes a servant—What I have done has been but in obedience, and not from choice. Grant me but protection, and I will confess.

Count F. Proceed—your life is safe.

Wolf. I do confess I was employed, though sorely against my will, with others, in the service of the baron—

Count F. To the point at once.—By what contrivance—by what base stratagem, was she conveyed beyond the walls?

Wolf. Even from this very spot it was, my lord. Mark you this grotto; at the furthest end, contrived in former times for purposes unknown to me, there is the hidden entrance to a path that leads through vaulted passages beneath the moat, and far beyond your walls.

Count F. Give me an instant proof of this.

Wolf. This way, my lord—you shall convince yourself. (*The Count enters with Wolfender, where Kaunitz, and his Comrades, who, while listening, have moved from the Grotto, enter behind him. Kaunitz throws the large cloak over his head, while at the same moment Wolfender and Schampt seize his Hands.*)

Count F. Help! help!

Wolf. Silence, or death! (*Holding a Pistol to his breast. The Count struggles—they force him into the Grotto, at the mouth of which the encounter takes place.*)

Wolf. Down with him into the secret pass.

[*Exeunt to Grotto, L.H.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT. II.

SCENE I.—*The interior of a Cottage—On one side a Chimney; a little further, on the same side, an external Door: on the other, the Door of an inner Chamber. A spinning Wheel, Table, and some wooden Chairs. Night—distinguished by the darkness of a high Window. A lamp on the Table. Amelia closing the door, which she fastens.—Music, as the curtain rises, indicating a storm.*

Amel. How dark the night! The river is fearfully agitated by the wind, and the sky threatens a storm! all is alike gloomy, without and within! still must the wretched Amelia, an outcast from her splendid birth-right, be grateful to heaven for the shelter even of this miserable roof. Within this week, too, death has robbed me of my dear foster-mother, the only comfort the world had left me! My enemies alone still live! I have lost all—parents, fortune, friends! all that I have left is hope, my innocence, and heaven! 'Tis Maria, the orphan daughter of my lost friend—oh let me forget my own sorrows, in the endeavour to lighten hers!

Enter MARIA from the inner room.

Amel. My dear Maria, why are you not yet at rest?—it is eleven o'clock!

Maria. I cannot sleep, dear madam—if I could, I should be happy.

Amel. I will not bid you cease to weep—but do not indulge in unreasonable grief. Sit down with me—before I go to rest, I wish to finish this work, and to-morrow you can take it to the village, and, at the same time, inquire after poor Emily—she wants nothing but

repose. I have prepared the opiate, with which your good mother used to relieve her; the effect of it is certain, and so expeditious, that she will fall asleep, as soon as she has drank it.

Maria. Ah, madam, you are a blessing to the village, for you are ever the friend of the unfortunate.

Amel. I wish to be so. Come, sit down—I have much to say to you.

Maria. To me, madam?

Amel. It is become necessary to form some plan for my future life;—you know, that since my escape from the baron of Hernhausen—who little dreams, that even on his own estate, I have found a peaceful home—here, for five years in the disguise of poverty, I have remained, sheltered and fostered still by her, whose tender care sustained my infant years. You know that some months ago my father died; but, fearing the dreadful power of my enemy, I have never dared return to claim my paternal rights. (*A faint halloo is heard, R.H.U.E.*) Hark! what can that mean? (*Halloo again.*) Some traveller, doubtless, who has lost his road. Run, Maria—no, not to the door—above stairs, from the window—run—make haste. [*Exit Maria up stairs.*]

Amel. (*Looking after her.*) Yes, artless innocent, I have no fear in trusting thee—but the softer secret of my heart, must still be mine alone. (*Takes a ring from her bosom.*) Shall I indulge this weakness—shall I indulge the sweet, the pleasing hope, which fancy has created? This ring, left by that interesting stranger, whom, by chance, I met eight days ago—this ring, emblazoned with the well known arms of Conenberg, does it not tell me who he was? Yes, yes—it must be Ferdinand, the relation whom, though from infancy I was taught to love, 'till that auspicious day, I never saw.

Maria. (*Within.*) Yes, yes, gentlemen, I will return in a moment.

Wolf. (*Without.*) Be quick, then, and open the door.

Enter MARIA running in terror down stairs.

Amel. Heavens! what is the matter? who is it?

Maria. Oh, madam, I shall die with fright! Here are several armed men, who are conducting some unhappy wretch.

Amel. A prisoner?

Maria. We are lost! (*A noise is heard near the entrance door.*) Don't you hear them?

Amel. Who can these people be?

Maria. Don't let them in, for heaven's sake.

Amel. Alas! we are unable to resist their strength—refusal would only irritate them: they are, perhaps, merely seeking shelter, and we *must* admit them. But, in the name of heaven, conceal your agitation, and above all, be sure to address me as your sister.

(*Amelia goes to open the Door.*)

Maria. What will become of us? I would sooner they should break open the door, than let them in myself.—(*Music.*)

The door being opened—Enter WOLFENDER.

Wolf. Good night, young lass, good night—I will be obliged to you, if you will afford me and my companions shelter for a few hours. Don't be alarmed, we shall not molest you.

Amel. You are very welcome—but you will find but bad accommodation in this poor cottage.

Wolf. We are charged with a prisoner of high rank, and it is prudent not to continue our journey until daylight. There is no other house within two leagues.

Amel. You are conducting a prisoner?

Wolf. Yes, the irreconcilable enemy of our master, the baron of Hernhausen. I am Wolfender, his faithful esquire.

Amel. Sir, I have the honour—(*Aside*)—another victim!

Wolf. My comrades are waiting, and our prisoner, above all, is in great need of rest. [*Exit. R.H.*]

Amel. Pray desire the gentlemen to come in. (*Aside*) If I can render any service to this unfortunate !

Maria. If you had denied them entrance, they would have proceeded on their journey.

Amel. Perhaps not.

*Enter WOLFENDER, DANGERFELDT, KAUNITZ, and SCHAMPT, with COUNT CONENBERG, prisoner, R.H.—
Music as they enter.*

Kaun. Here we are—the devil take the bridge for having obliged us to quit our conveyance. We have walked at least a league through all this rain.

Amel. (Aside.) Oh, heavens ! what dreadful faces !

Wolf. Cease your complaints, you shall have time to dry yourselves.

Kaun. (To the Count.) Sit you there.

(*Conenberg sits near the chimney. Amelia approaches and recognises her lover.*)

Amel. Ah !

Maria. (Running up to Amelia.) What's the matter, sister ?

Amel. Nothing, my dear, nothing at all. (*Aside.*) 'Tis he !

(*Amelia takes the ring from her bosom and kisses it.*)

Scham. Come, make us a bit of fire : we are wet to the skin.

Amel. (In great agitation.) Immediately, gentlemen. You shall have all you wish for immediately. (*Aside.*) The young stranger in the power of these wretches ! (*Aloud.*) Here are seats, gentlemen. Pray sit you down. Go and get something to make the fire burn, don't you see it is almost out ?—and make haste. (*To Maria, briskly.*)

Maria. I will, sister—Ah, heaven! what does she mean? (*Maria goes to the Chimney and stirs the Fire.*)

Wolf. Take time, good girl—We are sorry to give you so much trouble.

Amel. Since chance has procured me the honour of this visit, I shall endeavour to entertain you, as well as you deserve.

Wolf. You may depend upon it, you shall be well paid for your complaisance.

Amel. I don't doubt that: I shall do my best. (*To Maria.*) Is the fire burning?

Maria. Yes, sister.

Amel. Come gentlemen near the fire!

(*The soldiers are moving towards the fire, Wolfender calls them.*)

Wolf. Hear me. (*They all pass to his side—he addresses Dangerfeldt.*) You must pursue your journey: you will meet the detachment which ought to have met us at this cottage.

Amel. (*Aside.*) A detachment!

Wolf. You will desire them to hurry their march as much as possible.

Amel. Just heaven! how can I save him?

Dan. It shall be done. [*Exit Dangerfeldt, R.H.D.*]

Wolf. Go.

(*Amelia approaches the Count, and looks at him with interest, endeavouring to obtain his attention.*)

Wolf. What are you doing there? (*To Amelia.*) If you don't wish to lose your liberty, or your life, be careful how you go near the prisoner.

Count F. Prisoner! wretch! Dare you apply that term to me? I your prisoner! say rather your victim. If I had fallen into your master's power by the chance of war, I should have borne my fate with resignation; but thus seized by cowardly perfidy, I regard you as robbers and assassins.

Scham. Do you hear that? ha! ha! ha!

Amel. (*Aside.*) He does not see me! or he recollects me not! ha!—so much the better—it will answer my purpose. Heaven give me fortitude! I

must gain their confidence. (*Aloud.*) He is ignorant no doubt that every stratagem is allowable to entrap an enemy. I think the baron of Hernhausen has acted wisely. Make yourselves quite easy, friends, if any one here pities him, it will not be me.

Wolf. Well said, my lass.

Count F. Monster? It is a woman's voice—but the language of a dæmon.

Maria. I cannot think him guilty of any crime; he has the countenance of a good man.

Amel. Be silent—it does not become a child like you, to judge of people by their looks—very pretty indeed at your age. Prepare this table, and don't interfere with state affairs.

Maria. But sister—

Amel. Silence! do as I bid you.

Wolf. I am well satisfied with your zeal, my girl; I am fatigued, and wish to sleep for a short time. These brave men will guard our prisoner. Is there no place to repose in?

Amel. Certainly: in that room is a large couch on which you may sleep comfortably.

Maria. What, sister, in your room?

Amel. Yes, in my room—why not? one night is soon passed, especially when employed in doing a kind action—particularly to such *good* people.

Maria. All this appears like a frightful dream.

(*Aside.*)

Amel. In, good sir, and try to sleep: you may do so without fear, for, as you said, these gentlemen are quite sufficient to take care of your prisoner; besides, though only a woman, I can tell you I do not want either address or courage in a good cause.

Wolf. Well, then, I shall accept your offer.

Amel. Maria, give me a light.

Count F. The language of this woman shocks me!

Maria. Here it is. (*Giving a light.*)

Wolf. Thank you, my pretty child. (*To Amelia.*) I recommend my soldiers to your care; they must be in want of refreshment.

Amel. Make yourself easy; they shall want for nothing.

Wolf. Comrades, be zealous and watchful!

Kaun. You may rely on us. (*Music.*)

(*WOLFENDER, just about entering, returns and beckons the soldiers, and seems again to warn them to be careful of the Count. During this time, Maria, who has been attentively looking at the Count, leads Amelia towards the front of the stage. Wolfender enters the outer room.*)

Maria. (*To Amelia.*) Dear madam, do not be angry with me; I cannot help it: but the situation of this poor gentleman makes me quite unhappy.

Amel. Ah! my dear child, be careful!

Kaun. What are you talking about there?

Amel. I was saying—I was telling this little girl to bring some supper for you. Go, and bring the bread and——

Scham. And, above all, some wine.

Amel. Certainly, some wine, and *plenty*. It is the best I have to offer you. But go, go! these gentlemen must be waited on; why don't you go?

Maria. I am going, sister. (*Aside.*) I hardly know what I am about!

Amel. That young creature, you perceive, is very timid.

Scham. O, there's no harm in that. I like timidity; and to prove it to you, I shall give this pretty girl a kiss, and you one afterwards.

Maria. (*Flying into Amelia's arms.*) Oh! protect me.

Amel. (*Pressing her in her arms.*) Well, well, what's the matter now? Pshaw! the gentleman is only jesting; he would never repay our hospitality with rudeness. Pray, sir, leave her.

Scham. Damme, she is as wild as a young forest filly.

Amel. (*Aside.*) What will become of me? (*To Maria.*) Go into the cellar, and bring up as much wine as you can carry.

Maria. Yes, sister. (*Aside, going out.*) Oh! what a fearful night!

[*Exit Maria, L.H.*]

Amel. How to discover myself to him!

Kaun. You may depend upon it we shall inform the baron of the good reception you have given us.

Amel. (*With design.*) I beg you will not fail to do so; for you must know I have my own reasons for entertaining you to the best of my power. I want you to take a petition to him from me.

Scham. What about?

Amel. I once resided in the castle of Hernhausen; though, for the last five years, I have lived concealed in this miserable cottage.

Scham. Tell us how that came about.

Amel. With pleasure. You have, no doubt, heard of Amelia, the daughter of count Conenberg.

Count F. (*Starting from his reverie, surprised.*) Did my ears deceive me? (*Aside.*)

Kaun. Yes—well.

Amel. At the time she was carried off, I lived in the neighbourhood of the castle, and, as it was necessary she should have some companion in the prison in which she was destined to pass her life, unless she consented to the views of the baron, I was the person made choice of.

Kaun. Ah! ah! but I never saw you at the castle.

Amel. You, doubtless, know, that in three days Amelia had the address to gain over a soldier to her interest, and escaped from her prison.

Count F. (*Aside, and quickly.*) What do I hear?

Kaun. A soldier! that's impossible! Who was he?

Amel. His name was Augustus Lindorf.

Kaun. Ha! indeed! I remember the knave—he was of our regiment; he died some months ago. Well, and you—

Amel. Being fearful that suspicion would fall upon me, I secretly left the castle, and have ever since concealed myself in this cottage.

Kaun. And what is your name, pray?

Amel. Caroline Blomfeldt!

(Here the Count starts up, surveys her in great agitation, and then recollecting himself, returns to his seat. When he rises, his guards lay their hands on their arms.)

Kaun. What ails the man!

Scham. He startled me, 'faith!

Kaun. Poor gentleman! a little frantic, that's all. Never mind him. Well, damsel, proceed with your story.

Scham. You may safely appear before the baron; his anger must have subsided 'ere now, for you know, no doubt, that Amelia is dead.

Amel. You are very much mistaken; she is still living; and I know even the place of her retreat.

Kaun. Can it be possible!

Count F. (Aside.) Ha! my cousin lives, then!

Scham. Where, then, is she concealed?

Amel. It is that with which I wish myself to make the baron acquainted immediately.

Count F. Is it possible! Dupe that I was! How have I been deceived!

Kaun. Well, but this wine is very long on the road!

Amel. It will be here directly. In the mean time help me to move this table.

(They move it. Amelia does this in order to attract the Count's attention.)

Scham. Ah! here comes our little purveyor.

Enter MARIA, carrying a basket of wine, L.H.

Maria. I have brought up as much wine as I could carry.

Kaun. Four bottles? 'tisa pity you are not stronger.

Amel. She can go for more, if necessary. *(Aside.)* If I could but make them drink enough! *(Aloud.)* First drink this. *(She pours it out.)*

Scham. This is excellent wine!

Amel. (To the Count.) Are you in want of nothing?

although I am your enemy, I am not so wicked as to deny you a little refreshment.

Count F. Cruel, deceitful woman! no! I accept nothing from those that I despise.

Amel. As you please. (*Aside.*) He will not understand me.

Scham. Don't you drink with us?

Amel. Excuse me.

Scham. (*To Maria.*) Well, my pretty girl, won't you take a glass with us?

Maria. I thank you, sir; I am not thirsty.

Amel. Take no notice of her, pray. So young a girl has no business to drink wine.

Kaun. No? In that case I should make a devilish bad young lady. (*Drinks.*)

Amel. (*To Schampt.*) You don't drink, sir.

Scham. Don't I? but I will.

(*Amelia approaches the Count whilst the soldiers are pouring out the wine.*)

Amel. Hope and Confidence!

Count F. (*Looking at her with surprise.*) What does she say?

Amel. (*Whilst the soldiers drink.*) A blessed thought! the sleeping draught which I have prepared! its effect will be quicker! Yes, 'tis heaven that inspires me. (*Amelia goes to the inner chamber.*)

Scham. Where are you going?

Amel. I am going to see whether your captain is not in want of any thing. Ah! (*Returning.*) I have just thought of something!

Kaun. What is it?

Amel. (*Aside.*) I must not leave this dear girl with these wretches!—I feel, by the air, that the soldier who is gone has left the door open, so that your prisoner might escape.

Scham. Well said, my pretty maid.

Count F. Fallacious hope! how quickly faded!

Amel. Maria, go and lock the outer door, and bring me the key. I shall return in a minute.

Maria. I will, sister. (*She goes out, R.H.D. Amelia, L.H.*)

Scham. By the mass, we could not have found a better lodging.

Kaun. 'Squire Wolfender had a good notion, when he conducted us here. This fine girl makes an excellent hostess; let us drink her health.

Scham. (*With irony.*) Your good health, count Conenberg.

Count F. Cowards, do you add insult to your crimes? But tremble, dastards! the day of retribution will arrive. A thousand swords are drawn already to avenge me, and inflict a condign punishment on your perfidious master.

Kaun. In the mean while we shall carry him a hostage for the good behaviour of your friends.

Scham. Come, come, peace! I like to be quiet when I am eating and drinking.

Kaun. You are in the right. Here comes our hostess.

Enter AMELIA, L.H.

Amel. What a dreadful night! I have shut the easement. Your captain has fallen into a sound sleep—(*Aside, showing a bottle.*)—as I hope you will do ere long.

Enter MARIA, R.H.D.

Maria. Here is the key, sister.

Amel. (*To Maria.*) 'Tis well; hold this bottle a moment.

Scham. What is in it?

Amel. A liqueur of my own making; 'tis excellent for the health, and I cannot use it on a better occasion than the present.

Kaun. Another glass of wine first; we will taste that afterwards.

Amel. As you please; I will fill for you.

Maria. (Aside.) She has no compassion for this unfortunate. If I could, without being perceived—*(holds up the bottle of opiate)*—But how can I get him to drink? *(To the Count.)* Sir, sir—here, take this—*(pouring the liquor.)* Do not doubt me—indeed I pity you!

Count F. (As she presents the liquor to him.) Amiable child! There is one heart, at least, that pities me!

Amel. (Turning, and seeing him about to drink the opiate.) Ah! *(To Maria.)* What are you doing there? *(Dashes the glass from his hand.)*

Kaun. (His mouth full.) What are you doing there?

Amel. Was there ever such a foolish child! she was going to give him this liqueur—as if it was made for him, indeed!

Count F. (Aside.) What can this mean?

Scham. She is in the right. But, I dare say, the good girl will not treat you unkindly, and if you are thirsty—

Amel. Well, if he is thirsty, let him drink a glass of wine. But as to this liqueur—*(Showing the bottle)*—I intend this for you. Maria, you shall pour it out for these gentlemen.

Scham. It will be delicious from her hand.

Maria. Yes, sister. *(She takes the bottle, and pours.)*

Amel. Is there any wine left? *(She takes a bottle off the table.)* Yes, here is some. *(To the Count, handing him a glass of wine.)*—Here—I am not the wretch you think me. Be cautious! show no surprise! *(In a lower tone.)*—I will save you! *(She shows him the ring on her finger.)*

Count F. (Starting.) Ha!

Amel. Be silent! do not betray yourself.

Count F. Oh, happiness! *(He drinks.)*

Scham. Now we have finished the wine, let us taste this liqueur. *(They drink.)*

Amel. Then he is saved!

Scham. How do you like it?

Kaun. Why, middling—

Scham. It has a queer taste.

Kaun. Yes, it has a kind of sharp taste, that quite wakens one up.

Amel. (*Low to the Count.*) On the contrary, it will make them sleep.

Kaun. Have you any more of it?

Amel. No.

Kaun. In that case, suppose we have a little song, by way of finishing our repast?

Amel. With all my heart. I will begin.

(*A clap of Thunder.*)

Scham. Hah! hah! there's the symphony.

Maria. Hark! sister, how it thunders!

Amel. Well, what of that? We are under shelter. The thunder will not harm us—why should it? The bolt of heaven falls only on the guilty—we are innocent.

Kaun. Come, no preaching; let us have your song.

Amel. Certainly, directly.

SONG.—AMELIA.

When storms the mounting billows raise,

And all around is dark and drear,

What joy the seaman's eye displays

To mark some friendly light-house near.

Then danger o'er, he drops no more

The silent tear, nor heaves the sigh;

Though wild waves roar, and lash the shore,

To him they sing a lullaby.

Lullaby, &c.

Kaun. Damme! that's a drawling melancholy song; there's nothing in it to laugh at; 'tis enough to set one asleep.

Scham. (*Rubbing his eyes*) So it is, faith—I was already in a dream, I believe. I like a lively song, one that tells of—stop,—you shall hear.

SONG.—SCHAMPT. (*With a loud voice.*)

*Some may choose a life of thinking,
Others love the joys of drinking,
Some may sing of love divine,
Others may to war incline.
Some to laugh, and some to weep,
But I love better—I love better—better, &c.
(He falls asleep on the table.)*

Kaun. (*Going to sleep*) Well! what is it you love better? faith I believe it's to sleep.

Amel. There's one!

Kaun. One what?

Amel. One verse.

Kaun. Oh! then do you sing the second verse.

SONG.—AMELIA.

*So he who by some ruffian band
Is doom'd a captive to deplore,
With joy beholds some friendly hand
Outstretch'd to ope his prison door;
Then, dangers o'er, he drops no more
The silent tear, or heaves the sigh;
But softly treads where pity leads,
And sings his jailor's lullaby.
Lullaby, &c.*

(*Soft music, agreeing with the song, so as to finish the burthen.—Amelia examines whether they are asleep—Maria and the Count follow her—she continues singing, the burthen of the Song—and Kaunitz, who strives against sleep, at the end of the Verse, is fast asleep.*)

Amel. They sleep.

(She leads the Count forward.)

Count F. Preserving angel!

Amel. We must quit this place—hush! 'tis nothing. The effect produced by the opiate will only last a short time. Let us be quick—hark! no,—'tis only the wind. The boat is close at hand. Dear Ferdinand, you owe your liberty to Amelia.

Count F. Amelia!

Amel. Hush.

Count F. My guardian genius! Let us fly from your enemies and mine.

(Soft Music. Amelia blows out the Lamp, draws the Key from her Bosom, and they effect their escape, with cautious expedition, R.H.D.)

Kaun. *(Dreaming.)* Some wine—some wine—drink plentifully of the great tun of Hiedelberg.

Scham. A hundred ducats, or to prison. Quick for my horse—in my belt—*(Claps of Thunder.)* Lord bless you!—

Enter WOLFENDER, with a light, L.H.

Wolf. The storm has awakened me—where is the Count? this peasant woman—what do I see? my soldiers asleep! Hollo! awake!

Scham. Who is there?

Kaun. Who's alive?

Wolf. Rascals! awake directly.

Scham. } Here we are! here we are.

Kaun. }

Wolf. Where is the count? where is your prisoner? You shall answer for him with your lives.

Kaun. The count—ah! curses on it—he is not there.

Scham. I hope the thunder may crush them.

(Lightning and Thunder—Schampt is knocked down by the Lightning—The wall of the cottage is struck by a Thunderbolt, and falls with a loud noise; the River is seen through

the opening, very much agitated.—The Storm is at the height.)

Scham. Oh! I'm a dead man!

Wolf. This is awful! and makes me shake.

Kaun. What dreadful thunder! what is that?

(More Thunder—The Clouds pass quickly; a Boat in which are the Count, Amelia and Maria, is seen by the Lightning, violently tossed upon the River—The Count and Amelia make great exertions against the furious waves—Maria, her Hair dishevelled, her hands raised up to Heaven, and on her Knees—This Scene is shown by the repetition of the Lightning.)

Wolf. It seems as if the heavens would fall in flames upon this cottage? *(Perceiving the Boat.)* ha! See yonder! *(Loud and descriptive Music.—They grope their way over the Ruins, R.H.—The Curtain falls.)*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Forest.—To the right, a Cottage, with a Door and Window.—Night.*

Enter DANGERFELDT, KAUNITZ, and SCHAMPT, L.H.

Dan. Where are we now?

Kaun. Where?—why in the middle of the forest; can't you see?

Dan. No.—Can you?

Scham. But where is Wolfender with the escort, which we luckily met coming out of that cursed cottage?

Dan. He is guarding the plain which the fugitives must cross before they can reach the castle of Conenberg. It affords so little shelter, that a hare cannot cross it without being seen.

Kaun. And we are dogs, sent into the wood to drive the game out.

Scham. Precisely.—But how came this woman to take such a sudden interest in our prisoner?

Kaun. Women have a way of thinking of their own. The appearance of a man in peril excites in them a kind of pity—a sort of compassion, I believe they call it. Their souls are more tender; their virtues—in short, they are women; that's all I know about the matter.

Scham. Aye, aye; you've explained it clearly.

Dan. Surely I am not mistaken; that's a house I see there.

Kaun. You are right. Knock, and let us see whether it may not have afforded an asylum for the fugitives. Knock, Schampt.

Scham. (*Knocking, R.H.D.*) Holloa, who's there! within?

Bruhl. (*Within.*) Who's there?

Scham. Make haste and open the door.

Kaun. (*To his companions.*) Let me speak.

Bruhl. (*Coming out of his house.*) What is it you want?

Kaun. The devil! You are up betimes.

Bruhl. The storm has kept me awake all night, and when I can't sleep I never lie in bed.

Kaun. Does this cottage belong to you?

Bruhl. I fancy so;—why do you ask?

Kaun. What people have you in the house with you?

Bruhl. Nobody. I have been alone ever since my nephew, Moritz, went as gardener to the castle.

Kaun. (*Aside to Dangerfeldt.*) His nephew gardener at the castle—observe that.

Bruhl. (*Aside.*) I don't half like these gentry.

Kaun. And what do you do?

Bruhl. What do you mean, by what do I do?

Kaun. What business do you follow?

Bruhl. I am a wood-cutter.—Have you any more questions to ask?

Kaun. Yes—and will thank you for civil answers. Have you heard any noise in this forest to-night?

Bruhl. Noise! Do ye think I am deaf?—To be sure I have.

Kaun. Of what kind?

Bruhl. The wind, and hail, and thunder; and the branches of the trees breaking, crash! crash! 'Twas just as if the beasts of prey, in the forest, were giving a concert, with the elements for their musicians.

Dan. Answer distinctly, fellow;—has any person been here during the night?

Bruhl. No—I have not seen a soul. Now, is your catechism ended?

Kaun. (*To Dangerfeldt and Schampt.*) We had better search his cottage.

Bruhl. What's that you say about my cottage? By your leaves, gentlemen, you must show your authority before you think to enter here.

Kaun. (*To his Companions.*) In, comrades, and search.

Bruhl. Ah! at your peril!

(*Placing himself before the door.*)

Scham. What! Dare you oppose us?

Dan. Out of the way!

(*They push past him violently, and Dangerfeldt and Schampt enter the cottage.*)

Bruhl. Robbers!

Kaun. No, 'tis our duty: resistance would be vain. You see we are the strongest.

Bruhl. Yes; 'tis well for you that you are. (*To himself.*) If I had but my blunderbuss—

Kaun. What do you say?

Bruhl. Words!

Kaun. We are in search of a woman.

Bruhl. A woman!

Kaun. Yes; two women:—can you inform us where to find them?

Bruhl. Why, no:—and if I could, the very name of woman, would induce me to shelter them against gentlemen of your appearance.

Kaun. Well, there was a man too.

Bruhl. And a man ! Is he armed ?

Kaun. No.

Bruhl. I thought so ! Two women and an unarmed man ! Bravo ! You are three brave gentlemen !—And pray who are they ? Is either of the women your wife ?

Kaun. My wife ! Seeking after my wife !—You're a bachelor, I guess, or you wouldn't ask that question. No : these women have assisted the escape of a prisoner of rank.

Bruhl. Well, what have I to do with that ? 'Tis no concern of mine.

Enter DANGERFELDT and SCHAMPT, from the Cottage, R.H.

Dan. The cottage is empty.

Scham. We have searched every where, and seen nothing.

Bruhl. And taken nothing ?

Dan. What !

Scham. Now you are at liberty to go into your house and examine.

Bruhl. Really, gentlemen, I am very much obliged to you ! Gentlemen, I thank you !

Dan. Oh ! there's no need of that.

Bruhl. Pardon me : when we are troubled with bad company, we should always be grateful for their departure. So my service to you.

[Exit Bruhl into the cottage.]

Kaun. Silence ! I hear a footstep.

Dan. I see ! 'Tis Wolfender.

Enter WOLFENDER, L.H.

Wolf. Ah ! Are you there ? Have you seen nothing of them ?

Kaun. No, captain, nothing Have you ?

Wolf. I know, to a certainty, that they are still in this wood.

Kaun. How so?

Wolf. As soon as we arrived at the entrance of the plain, by the aid of a lengthened flash of lightning, we saw the count and the two women emerge from a thick part of the wood. They perceived us also, and quickly hid themselves amid the trees : but, by heaven ! they shall not again escape us. This part of the wood being almost surrounded by the curve of the river, nearly forms an island ; and I have placed the detachment directly across between the shores, so as to intercept their retreat ; while a sufficient guard is posted yonder, on the other side of the foot-bridge, to prevent their escape that way.

Kaun. But if our search should prove fruitless?

Wolf. Still, of their destruction I am certain, as I have ordered the wood to be set fire to in every direction, and thus they must inevitably fall into our hands, or perish in the flames.

Scham. While we are sure of our retreat, by the bridge.

Kaun. Bravely planned ! Meantime let us have a thorough search.

Wolf. Away, then ! and let your present zeal repair your past negligence. [*Exeunt*, L.H.U.E.

Enter MORITZ, groping about him, L.H.

Mor. Oh dear ! I thought I heard voices. Lord ! Lord ! I don't know whether I tremble with cold or fear ! Why did I come to this part of the forest alone, instead of accompanying Mr. Werther and the soldiers ! Who says I'm not a bold man ? As I entered the wood I saw a wolf ; trying to save myself, I met a bear ! I scrambled up a tree, like a squirrel, and there I found a man—a soldier ; but luckily he was more frightened than I, and so I bullied him lustily. But where am I ? Ah ! that's my uncle's house—the door, the window—it must be it. What it is to have instinct ! Without knowing it, and without seeing it, I seem, as it were,

led to it. I must knock. (*He knocks.*) Bruhl ! uncle Bruhl ! 'Tis your nephew, uncle.

Bruhl at the Cottage window.

Bruhl. What ! not gone yet !

Mor. How gone yet ? Why I am only just come !

Bruhl. Ah ! is it you, Moritz ? so early.

(*He descends.*)

Mor. Say, rather, so late ; it is yesterday to me, for I have not been in bed all night. There's Laura swore she'd follow with the servants ; I hope she won't venture !

Enter BRUHL, from the Cottage.

Mor. But what is the matter, uncle ? what frightens you so ?

Bruhl. Frightens me ? I don't know what you mean.

Mor. Why I think you look pale ; only I can't see whether you do or not. Is it fear, uncle ?

Bruhl. Fear ! what's that ?

Mor. Dear heart, how courageous you are, not to know what fear is ! I'm tolerably brave myself, by daylight ; but somehow, in the dark—in a wood, with the bears, and the wolves, and the armed men, and the devil—

Bruhl. Why plague on't Moritz, what ails you ? you were not used to be so cowardly.

Mor. No, nor I an't cowardly now ; only I an't quite courageous.

Bruhl. Well, leave this fooling ; I'm out of humour—

Mor. With whom, uncle ?

Bruhl. With three impudent fellows who have just been here, and forced their way into my house.

Mor. (*Looking round, and speaking in a low voice.*) What do you mean by three impudent fellows ?

Bruhl. They were in search of a man, who, they said, was their prisoner.

Mor. (*Quickly.*) Has he escaped from them?

Bruhl. Who?

Mor. Hav'nt you heard what has happened at the castle?

Bruhl. No; what is it?

Mor. Why, my lord, the count has been carried off in a most irresistible way, by emissaries of the baron of Hernhausen. Mr. Werther is like a madman. We all armed ourselves and went in instant pursuit of the rascals. I followed Mr. Werther, and managed to lose sight of him—wandered about, met a herd of bears, who, happily, said nothing to me, found myself at your door, knocked—and here I am.

Bruhl. Gracious Heaven! What do you tell me? The count carried off? Quick, quick, Moritz! We must go in search of our good master.

Mor. That's what I say—we must go in search of our good master.

Bruhl. Run instantly to the extremity of the forest.

Mor. (*In fear.*) Wh—wh—wh—at!

Bruhl. Run to the old ruin; you will then see my wood-cutters: tell them to come to me directly, armed. I will place myself at their head, and beat every path of the forest.—*Go!*

Mor. Yes, it's easy enough to say *Go!*—but I think, uncle, you can manage it better: suppose you *go* yourself, and leave me to take care of your house.

Bruhl. Coward! Yes, I will fly myself; and do you wait here till my return. [*Exit Bruhl, R.H.*]

Mor. Take care of the bears!—Well, I should not have run so fast!—Coward! not at all! Age gives one a certain degree of courage. I'm brave enough at times.—Hark! I hear somebody.—Yes! 'tis my duty to take care of the house.

[*Enters the Cottage and shuts the door, Music expressive of cautious motion.*]

Enter COUNT and MARIA, L.H.

Count F. (*Entering first.*) All is silent! come on.

Maria. Ah, no! She is not here!

Count F. Alas! there is no more happiness for the wretched Conenberg! My preserver is lost for ever!

Maria. Say not so! Indeed I can go on.

Count F. This hope alone remains. Having been separated from us, the moment we saw the soldiers, she cannot have fallen into their hands, and we may yet find her.

Maria. See! see! Here is an habitation.

Count F. Should kind fortune have led her here for refuge! (*He knocks.*) Nobody—(*Knocks.*) What, no person in the house? Oh, my beloved! where art thou?

Maria. Oh, sir, support me! This last disappointment—

Count F. Cheerly, dear girl! Providence, which has so lately rescued me from peril, will not desert me now.

Maria. Alas! in vain you offer consolation.—Hope has fled my soul! Are not those wretches still active in pursuit.

Count F. Oh, Heaven! do not recall that dreadful image! Perhaps, at this moment, she is struggling in their furious grasp.—Ah! every hope forsakes me! I sink beneath the violence of grief.

Mor. (*At the window.*) I thought I heard somebody whisper—Not such a blockhead as to open the door, because you knock.

Count F. Let us pursue our search, despair shall supply the place of fortitude.

Mor. Lord, forgive me, for 'tis my lord the count!

Count F. Hark! some one speaks.

Mor. (*In a low voice.*) My lord! Count! Count Conenberg!

Count F. Who calls me?

Mor. 'Tis I—Moritz.

Count F. Moritz.

Mor. Here, at the window.

Maria. Ah! have you seen a female? Is she in the house?

Mor. No, I am quite alone.

Count F. Where are we ?

Mor. Before my uncle's house, in the little peninsula.—Wait there and I will come down.

(He leaves the window.)

Mar. Ah ! I was in hopes—

Count F. Let us not despair : this fortunate rencontre may be of the greatest service to us.

Mor. *(Coming out of the house.)* My master ! my dear master !

Count F. Good Moritz ! I thank heaven for leading me here—Is Bruhl at home ?

Mor. No, my lord : he has gone with his woodcutters in search of you. Mr. Werther, your soldiers, your servants, your vassals, all are seeking you.

Count F. I have lost one dearer to me than my life.—Come, let us penetrate the thickest parts of the wood to seek for her.

Mor. No, no—You must take care how you do that. You may meet with some of those horrible soldiers of the baron's. I will go alone.—Bless you, I've plenty of courage now : besides, what have I to fear ? They won't eat me ! and the bears are all going to bed by this time : so both of you go into my uncle's house, and in case of any alarm, you will find, upon the chimney-piece, an old sword, and my uncle's blunderbuss.—You know what I mean—a great gun.

Count F. Horrible suspense ! Fly, my good fellow ! fly into the wood.

Mor. I will, as soon as you fly into the cottage.

Count F. Hasten your return.

[Exeunt Count and Maria into the cottage.]

Mor. *(Alone.)* There, they are safe : for this house of my uncle's is built as strong as a castle. I'll double lock the door, so that the devil himself can't get in ; and they won't be able either to get out : but that's nothing.

(He locks the door and puts the key in his pocket.)

Good ! I am now easy on their account—but on my own ? Poh ! poh ! I do it for my master, my good master ! I would sacrifice—'Tis impossible to be afraid

in such a cause! Hey! Bless us! What's that? A bear! a great she-bear and her two cubs, by all that's alarming.

[*Exit Running, R.H.U.E.*

(*Scarcely is Moritz gone, before the Music announces the arrival of Amelia.—She is pale, her hair in disorder, and running across the Stage, from L.H.U.E.*)

Amel. Oh heaven! what will become of me? I die with fatigue! Merciful providence! abandon me not! Restore me to safety, or end my sufferings at once! Ha! my pursuers approach! I see them!—Whither can I fly? where conceal myself? Ah! a house! (*She runs and knocks.*) Open the door, for mercy's sake! Save me! Save me!

MARIA, at the Cottage Window.

Maria. Gracious heaven! 'tis she!

Amel. Save me!

Maria. Fly! fly to the door! I see the soldiers coming!

Count. (*Within.*) Impossible! it is locked, and I have not the key,

Maria. Force it quickly—they are here!

Count F. (*Shaking the Door.*) It will not yield!

Maria. (*At the Casement.*) Are there no means of getting up here?

Amel. Impossible! I am lost!

Count F. Fear not, my love, I will protect you still. Keep close to the door!

Amel. What will become of me?—They come! Oh, heavens! I can no longer support myself.

(*She falls near the Door.*)

Enter KAUNITZ and SCHAMPT, L.H.U.E.

Scham. I tell you I saw her fly this way.

Kaun. I tell you, 'twas fancy.

Scham. Ha! I see her; look, there she is!

Amel. O spare me! in pity spare me!

Scham. Where's the count.

(*Count appears at the Window with the Blunderbuss, and Maria.*)

Count. Here—remorseless villains! approach her and die! (*They retreat in fear to the other side of the Stage—Amelia falls on her Knees, and thanks heaven—The Count keeps them at Bay.*)

Scham. It is the count himself! We have them now in our power.

Count. Not yet, villain. We will sell our lives dearly!

Scham. (*Levelling a Pistol at Amelia.*) Withdraw your arms, or she dies!

Count F. Unmanly dastard!

(*A moment's pause.—Schampt turns his Head, and motions Kaunitz to seize her.—Count fires.—Schampt is wounded, and staggers.—He raises his Pistol to fire at Amelia.—At the instant Kaunitz runs to her and seizes her.—Schampt drops his Pistol, and staggers off, L.H.—Kaunitz has possession of Amelia, and drags her forward.—She seizes on the Pistol which Schampt has dropped, and presents it at Kaunitz.—At this moment the Count, rendered desperate, leaps from the Window, armed with the Sword, and attacks Kaunitz.—They fight off, L.H.U.E.; and Moritz enters, R.H.U.E.—He is about to assist him, when he discovers Amelia.—She implores his succour, and he opens the Door, and puts her in; then having shut and locked the Door, runs off to the Count's assistance, L.H.U.E.*)

Re-enter COUNT, L.H.S.E.

Count F. The villain has escaped me! (*Looking out at the bottom of the Stage.*) My pursuers approach. This way, my preserver! The forest blazes all around

—we may still escape by the bridge. Ha! gone! oh, mercy, heaven! Amelia! Amelia!

AMELIA, *at the Window.*

Amel. I am safe! I am here!

Count F. Ha! the door again fastened! The whole forest is on fire! the flames approach rapidly! throw yourselves from the window.

Amel. Oh, heaven! I dare not! (*Stage in flames.*)

Count F. The fire seizes on the back part of the cottage! Fear not, my love, these arms shall save you.
(*She hesitates.*)

Enter BRUHL and MORITZ, with his Wood-cutters,
L.H.

Bruhl. Now, Moritz, now—Ha! here is the count himself!

Count F. Haste, and assist me to force open the door of this cottage. Hasten, I beseech you. See! the cottage blazes!

Bruhl. Oh, if that's it—down goes the door in a twinkling, (*The flames increase.—They force open the Door; Amelia and Maria run out.*)

Bruhl. Fly! fly! the flames close in upon us! The bridge! the bridge! (*Going to L.H.*)

Mor. Escape is impossible! The bridge is guarded by the baron's soldiers, and the fire surrounds us every where! (*Werther and his Soldiers appear at the bottom, R.H.U.E.—He rushes forward to the Count, after speaking to the Soldiers.*)

Wer. On to the charge! (*The Soldiers go off by the Bridge, L.H.*) Away! My friend, away! We must cut our passage through the enemy's soldiers, who guard the bridge. Follow me, brave soldiers; we will save your master.

(*The whole of the Cottage, and R.H. of the Wood on fire.—Cracking—Wind—Rain—Clashing of Swords, &c.—By this time the Wood is on fire.—The Forest is consumed,*

and, as the Smoke disperses, the Bridge is discovered burning also.—The Count, Amelia, and Maria, escape through the Flames over the burning Bridge, a part of which falls, blazing into the River.—The Fugitives remain in safety on the unbroken part of the Bridge.—At this time, Wolfender and his Party enter in front.—They are about to follow to the Bridge when they see it fall.)

Wolf. They have escaped! Just heaven, we are caught in our own snare! The bridge is down—our only chance of escape is thus cut off.

Kaun. Plunge into the river; we may still save ourselves! (*As they are flying towards the River, two large Trees, in full blaze, fall right across their road, and intercept them.*)

Wolf. There is no longer hope! Have mercy, heaven! (*The Count, &c. &c. appear upon the Ruins of the Bridge in a group, expressing joy and gratitude.—Wolfender and Kaunitz are on their Knees in front—their Party in attitudes of despair.—The Curtain falls.*)

FINIS.

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